DOCTOR OF BUSINESS (DBA)

Sense-making of Legitimacy During Institutional Radical Change

Du Plessis, Linda

Award date:
2020

Awarding institution:
University of Bath

Sense-making of Legitimacy During Institutional Radical Change

Linda Alida du Plessis

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Business Administration

University of Bath

School of Management

June 2020

COPYRIGHT NOTICE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of figures

List of tables

ABSTRACT

After an unprecedented wave of violent student protests, the South African government introduced free public higher education for students with a household income below a predetermined threshold. This study fills a gap in the literature by investigating how university executives meet the demand for legitimacy from internal and external stakeholders during such an unplanned radical change. The exploration focuses on institutionalised practices that triggered radical change at South African public universities; the influence of legitimacy demands on universities' ability to deal with radical change; the identification and reconsideration of rational myths during radical change; and how personal values and emotions of change agents with varying positions and levels of power within the university influence radical change. Due to the complexity of the higher education environment and the involvement of multiple resources and relationships with internal and external stakeholders, a single theory cannot cover all the aspects affected by the radical change. As a result, institutional theory and the theory of sense-making are used as lenses to better understand the process of radical change. Phenomenological research within a constructivist research paradigm is used. The focus of this research is on the management level. Multiple perspectives are obtained by using mixed methods for data collection and through thematic analysis as well as metaphor analysis of the data. In this way, triangulation contributes to an information-rich study and allows for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

This study contributes to filling the gap on how senior managers deal with radical change at highly institutionalised organisations. The theory of neo-institutionalism is expanded through the development of a conceptual framework of the sense-making of legitimacy during radical change at universities. The study extends the theory on sense-making by illustrating how metaphor analysis enhances the sense-making of legitimacy, and a cognitive map of emotions experienced during radical change is developed. The findings contribute to the sense-making of the South African fee protests by exposing the underlying driving forces.

Key words: higher education, institutional theory, legitimacy, metaphor analysis, phenomenology, radical change, sense-making

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I am very grateful to a number of people who have been instrumental in getting this thesis to completion. Some however, deserve special mention:

My supervisor – I am indebted to Dr. Hong Bui without whom this research would not have been possible and who gave me the idea of exploring South African higher education through the lens of sense-making and institutional theory. Thank you for directing me in a way that expanded my thinking about steering change at universities.

My family – who enrich my life by just being there for me.

My fellow DBA students from South-Africa – to have a network of colleagues in higher education is a constant inspiration for me.

My employer, the North-West University – thank you for allowing me this time and space to pursue this personal development goal. I am indebted to the university.

1 Chronicles 16:34: Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

Participation in the DBA programme and this doctoral research study was made possible through a collaborative University Capacity Development Grant that was awarded by the DHET to Nelson Mandela University.

- so this thesis is for my granddaughter, Kristie – who are the future.

"As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter words, but to live by them." —John F Kennedy

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

A decline in university subsidy together with an increase in youth unemployment led to cumulative levels of frustration amongst students at public universities. Universities became the playing field where students rebelled against rising tuition fees; demanding fee-free education. What began as a protest over proposed fee increases, within days, led to a nationwide call for free education, with thousands of students and staff across the country participating in one of the biggest student protest movements that have dominated South African Higher Education. Although the call for free higher education for the poor was widely supported, the violence, destruction of property, and boycotting of academic activities generated mixed responses. After two years of instability, the president, without warning, announced fee-free higher education for the poor. This announcement was made less than three weeks before the commencement of the new academic year, leaving the national student financial aid system as well as public universities in a state of flux. University leadership had to steer universities through this period of unplanned radical change.

The subject of this study is sense-making of legitimacy during radical change. Public universities in South Africa are embroiled in an era of unplanned radical change driven by the need to provide free higher education and overcome past inequalities amidst a broader, unstable economic climate in the country. Senior university leaders have to provide strategic direction at institutions known to be slow-changing; with student populations largely consisting of millennial students (Elam, Stratton, Gibson, 2007). That this is a stressful task is evident by the fact that some 13 out of the 26 vice-chancellors voluntarily resigned between January 2017 and June 2018 due to the pressures that come with the job (Bawa, 2018).

I am interested in understanding how university officials maintained legitimacy during this period of radical change. Each of the social actors interpreted the #FeesMustFall protest movement and subsequent introduction of free higher education from their perspective, influenced by their personal belief systems. Organisations must be conceptualised as consisting of many dynamic processes that suffer recurrently the influence of the actions of its social actors (Agar, 2011; Angrosino, 2011, Weick et al., 2005). Following this supposition of multiple worldviews, the ontological assumption of this research is that there is more than one reality.

Whilst the environment impacts social actors, these social actors influence one another as well as the environment in return. This reciprocal relationship is strongly affected by the context as well as the values and belief systems of the social actors.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Unequal access and study opportunities for students and staff along lines of race, gender, class, and geography, as well as a lack of coordination and systemic planning, were challenges that confronted the higher education system in 1994 after the first democratic election (Adelzadeh, 2003; CHE, 2016a). Twenty years into democracy, South Africa is regarded as one of the most consistently unequal countries in the world facing high rates of unemployment and poverty (Bhorat, Stanwix and Yu, 2015). Education is globally perceived as a key enabler in providing a better future for the youth and reducing inequality. Therefore, the inability of the higher education system in South Africa to sufficiently advance access and address academic exclusion, as well as the slow pace of transformation, came under scrutiny and reached a tipping point in 2015.

The subsequent announcement of free higher education introduced a period of unplanned radical change. There are clear indications that this period of radical change was not unproblematic and senior managers were confronted with multifaceted issues whilst trying to maintain institutional legitimacy and remain competitive (Jansen, 2017b; Langa, 2017). The aforementioned put university managers under enormous pressure, making them feel exposed and isolated in ensuring that their institutions remain desirable places of learning and research for both students and staff. In the short term, university managers had to try and keep daily operations going and protect expensive infrastructure and resources whilst ensuring that academic integrity and competitiveness are secured in the longer term.

Pavlyutkin (2014) asserted that radical change in higher education in general has not become a subject for abstract and theoretical reflection as they were studied mostly through a first-order change lens. In studies about radical change, universities were considered more as strategic actors and manage-centred organisations (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). Furthermore, the majority of studies are done based on change at large service delivery or manufacturing organisations and parallels on dealing with radical change at universities and profit-driven organisations are not exact. Assessing a university's standing and determining its competitive

advantage depends on subjective factors such as alumni performance, innovation, and graduate attributes. There are few bottom-line measures, like profit or return on investment, that apply to the generation and dissemination of knowledge.

1.3 Purpose statement

This study provides insight into how sense-making of legitimacy occur during radical institutional change by studying the process of the introduction of free higher education at public universities in South Africa. Deephouse and Carter (2005) recommended that, in an attempt to comprehend the legitimation process of an institution, change agents need to be aware of the different stakeholders that affect the legitimacy and what the legitimacy issues relevant to those respective groups are. This study unpacks the legitimacy expectations from stakeholders.

Lepsius (2017) pointed to the complexity of the dual role of change agents, who are actors in the institutionalised system but must also fulfil the role of change initiators where they need to question the very same rational myths they are part of. The focus of this research is on senior managers who, as change agents, are largely responsible for strategic and executive decision-making. Linden (2017) found that early attempts at sense-making of the South African protests focused on finding someone or something to blame, rather than a quest for understanding. This study intends to address this gap in the literature. The broader aim of this study is to contribute to the field of knowledge about sense-making and radical change in highly institutionalised sectors.

1.4 Underpinning theories

The complexity of universities as institutions, as well as the multifaceted demands presented to universities during the fee protests, cannot be described or understood using a single theory. Furthermore, the intricacy of the higher education environment, the involvement of multiple resources and the relationships of internal and external stakeholders necessitated multiple theories. As a result, sense-making and institutional theory were used as lenses to better understand the legitimacy demands on senior managers of institutions during radical change.

1.5 Research questions

This study attempts to provide insight into how sense-making of legitimacy occur during radical institutional change. The power structure, culture, routines, strategy, and legitimacy judgements of the entire organisation are influenced by radical organisational change (Miller and Friesen, 1984; Tushman and Romanelli, 1985). The main question that frames this study is: how do university executives meet the demand for legitimacy from internal and external stakeholders during such a controversial change process? The principal objectives are fourfold and the following sub-questions are formulated:

1. Which institutionalised practices triggered radical change at South African public universities?
2. How do legitimacy demands on universities influence its ability to deal with radical change?
3. How do change agents identify and reconsider rational myths during radical change?
4. How do personal values and emotions of change agents with varying positions and levels of power within the university influence radical change?

1.6 Methodology

The research is conducted from a constructivist research paradigm. Where positivists believe that there is only one reality, constructivists are of the view that there is no real truth, but multiple realities that need to be understood (Bowen, 2009). To address the aforementioned research questions, the lived experiences of the change agents that were engaged in the process, at the time, were explored to provide insight into their thoughts and emotions that shaped their decision-making. In the constructivist research paradigm, the view is that knowledge is established through meanings attached to the phenomena being studied (Coll and Chapman, 2000; Cousins, 2002). The epistemology that guides this research is grounded on authoritative knowledge, as data were gathered through observation, document reviews and semi-structured interviews.

This research is underpinned by the ontological assumption that reality is not of an objective nature, but rather the outcome of individual cognition. Institutional theory – that is used as a lens to assess radical change at universities - is also underpinned by certain ontological assumptions. This research is undertaken to better understand the role and behaviour of university officials as social actors during radical change through the lens of institutional theory

and as such the research paradigm should be congruent with the principles of institutional theory.

Based on a constructionist view, phenomenological research usually embodies lived experiences, perceptions, and feelings of social actors about a phenomenon and is a powerful approach for surfacing deep issues and making voices heard (Lester, 1999; Rockmore, 2011). As a social research method, phenomenology focuses on the capturing of naturally occurring human behaviour in a setting that exists independently of the research project, as opposed to artificial settings such as experiments (Genzuk, 2003; Stanley and Wise, 1993; Whitehead, 2005). This research study uses participant observation since the researcher is also a social agent and forms part of the senior managers that have to deal with the change at universities, from the start of the #FeesMustFall movement until the implementation of free higher education. The researcher is thus an interested and subjective actor rather than a disconnected and unbiased observer, whilst realising that the researcher's responsibility to put personal opinions aside, is a fundamental requirement for the validity and reliability of the phenomenological research process. This research project emphasises the importance of how clarifications and meanings have been placed on findings, as well as making the researcher visible in the planning and conducting of the research.

Data were gathered through observation, document analysis and capturing the personal experiences of senior university managers using semi-structured interviews. These senior university managers were identified through multistage sampling as I selected participants by using combinations of different sampling methods. Formal and informal conversations are both significant and equally important to record not only what is heard but also what is observed (Agar, 2011; Angrosino, 2011). In this way, knowledge is enriched through personal experiences.

1.7 Definition of key terms

The following key terms will be defined: institutional theory, institutionalisation, legitimacy, radical institutional change, sense-making, and FeesMustFall. These terms will be further explored in chapters two and three where the literature review and context of the study are detailed.

1.7.1 Institutional theory

Institutional theory is widely used in organisational issues, including those in the context of higher education. Thornton (2004) used institutional theory to examine the higher education textbook industry and created a distinctive conceptualisation of markets as historically-contingent relational structures. Morphew and Huisman (2002) used institutional theory as a lens to examine the occurrence of academic drift in higher education systems and observed that universities tend to grow more alike over time, even though the importance of institutional diversity is underscored in several studies (Reimer and Jacob, 2011; Weingarten and Deller, 2019). Institutional theory is used to analyse the deeper aspects of a social structure and how the elements that encompass the social structure are created, diffused and shaped over time and space. Meyer and Rowan (2006) made a significant contribution to the application of institutional theory in education. Their institutional analysis highlighted the complex role of universities as being gatekeepers of formal knowledge and also impacting social life as societal institutions. Cai and Mehari (2015) did a comprehensive review on the use of institutional theory in higher education research. They concluded that the full potential of applying institutional theory in the higher education environment has not been sufficiently exploited by higher education researchers.

Institutional theory is particularly prominent in helping to appreciate and define state and societal institutions (Steinmo and Thelen, 1998). It is often used to reflect on the establishment of humanly devised structures, guided by rules, norms, and routines, which then, in turn, serves as guidelines for social behaviour during political, economic, and social interactions. From the perspective of neo-institutionalism, elements of an environment such as culture, symbols, cognitive systems, and normative beliefs define organisations, in contrast to earlier institutional definitions that were based on technical requirements, resource streams and flow of information (Scott and Meyer, 1983). It is important to not only understand and recognise the institutional elements but also to appreciate the sources of these elements.

1.7.2 Legitimacy

Legitimacy is often associated with institutional theory and refers to the acceptance of an organisation by its environment. (Scott, 2004, Scott and Meyer, 1983). At the heart of institutional change is the notion of maintaining legitimacy. Legitimacy has long been recognised as a vital resource for power-holders looking to develop and maintain authority and

ensure unwavering compliance from their subordinates (Tyler, 2006; Zelditch, 2001). Legitimacy can take on more than one form.

Hough et al. (2013) provided a well-defined argument for legitimacy being determined by a tripartite between normative (instrumental), empirical (perceived) and moral legitimacy. According to Hinsch (2010) normative legitimacy is objective and achieved by meeting desirable standards, whereas empirical legitimacy is subjective and less value-laden. Empirical legitimacy is the recognition and justification of the right to exercise power and influence. Moral legitimacy is based on the extent to which institutions are perceived as operating according to firm moral and ethical standards. Based on the aforementioned distinctions, an institution can for example be popular, and therefore enjoy empirical legitimacy, whilst not meeting the principles for normative legitimacy. Moral or ethical legitimacy is bestowed when the actions of the organisation are consistent with social values (Suchman, 1995). Moral legitimacy is based on judgements about what organisations should and should not do. It is established when a change agent's communication is perceived as honest and transparent and when change agents act in ways that are compatible with the stakeholders' moral and ethical values.

Legitimacy can be conferred internally by social actors inside the organisation, or externally by outside constituents. Drori and Honig (2013) defined internal legitimacy as the acceptance or normative validation of an organisation’s strategy through agreement by the social actors. Acceptance reinforces organisational practices and mobilises social actors around a common strategy or ideology. Internal legitimacy relies on a bottom-up approach rather than an approach where practices are promoted and endorsed by organisational leaders based on expected efficiencies. External legitimacy is reinforced when stakeholders outside the organisation endorse the worthiness of the vision, objectives and strategy, and belief that the organisation holds the competence to efficiently work towards achieving the designated objectives (Zimmerman and Zeitz, 2002). The collective judgement of cognition, relation, instrumentation, and morality informs a legitimacy judgement. It has been recognised that legitimacy, in the long run, subsists in the eye of the beholder. Bitektine (2011) provided a comprehensive list of the sub-forms of normative and empirical legitimacy, but added that the most appropriate forms of legitimacy in a particular circumstance depend on the dimensions of the institution’s activities, staff, processes, and relationships.

1.7.3 Institutionalisation

Institutionalisation refers to the process through which components of a formal structure become repeated over time, assigned similar meanings, and become widely accepted, as both appropriate and necessary and serve to legitimate organisations (Berger and Luckmann, 1967; Scott, 2004). According to Scott (2004), institutionalisation is a process of instilling value and supplying intrinsic worth to a structure or a process. Institutionalisation is also viewed as a process of creating reality. The argument is that social order is based fundamentally on a shared social reality which, in turn, is a human construction, being created through social interaction and ongoing externalisation (Scott, 1987, Lepsius, 2017). The prominence of path dependence is clear throughout institutionalisation. This is also referred to as a punctuated equilibrium model of change, where the flow of events is interspersed or punctuated by critical junctures, indicating a break-point or a new path (Hall and Taylor 1996; March and Olsen, 2006; Tushmann and Romanelli, 1985). On this path, sense-making is a way station on the road to a consensually constructed and coordinated system of action, guiding the reproduction of institutions (Taylor and Van Every, 2000).

1.7.3.1 Environmental institutionalisation

A distinction should be made between environmental and organisational institutionalisation. Environmental institutionalisation assumes that the basic process starts with the reproduction or copying of system-wide social facts onto the organisational level. Research from DiMaggio and Powell (1983) and Scott and Meyer (1983) moved away from the conception of the institutional environment as a single structure, to one of multiple institutional environments With their concept of rational myths and through the use of many and diverse examples of public opinions, educational systems, laws, courts, professions, ideologies, regulatory structures, incentives, accreditation bodies, and governmental endorsements, they underscored the multiplicity and diversity of institutional sources and belief systems found in modern societies.

1.7.3.2 Organisational institutionalisation

Many definitions of institutions are provided. Jepperson (1991) described an institution as a social pattern that is regulated by rewards and sanctions. An alternative formulation, viewed from an actor perspective, is given by DiMaggio and Powell (1991) who claimed that institutions establish the criteria with which individuals discover their preferences. Although theorists have different foci, there are also several commonalities – institutions are multi-faceted

and durable, implement organised and established procedures, recognise social structure validity, and are made up of symbolic elements, social regulations, and material resources (Jepperson, 1991; Scott, 2004; Streeck and Thelen, 2005).

According to the work of Zucker (1987) institutionalisation is rooted in conformity. Conformity is not underscored by sanctions or internalisation processes, but rather by the routine aspects of everyday life. A routine process, duty or practicality should not be dismissed as a passive element in behaviour, but should rather be seen as a way of directing attention to selected aspects of a situation (Powell and Colyvas, 2008).

1.7.4 Radical institutional change

There are two polar schools of thought on change: radical change and incremental change. Whilst incremental change is commonly associated with continuous improvement and involves minor adjustments and gradual improvements towards a result, radical change involves a simultaneous change in multiple core organisational elements and is usually associated with urgency, speed, and fundamental or system-wide changes, (Amis, Slack and Hinings, 2004; Pavlyutkin, 2014). Radical change can be described by a composite range of descriptive terms, ranging from a quantum, transformational, disruptive, evolutionary, discontinuous, non-linear, complex change or a fundamental rethink, to a process of dramatic and revolutionary change across a range of organisational features and parameters (Al-Mashari and Zairi, 1999; Greenwood and Hinings, 1996; Matta and Ashkenas, 2003). Pavlyutkin (2014) referred to radical change as the deconstruction of an established institutional order. Many research projects point towards radical institutional change as being dicey, having a high risk of failure and that capacity for steering radical change is underdeveloped (Gachie, 2017; Matta and Ashkenas, 2003). During radical change, high time pressure and reduced resources often impose severe constraints on change agents whilst external stakeholders, regulatory agencies, and clients or customers hold high expectations for rapid performance improvement (Amis, Slack and Hinings, 2004; Huy, 2002; Romanelli and Tushman, 1994).

Hilton and Jacobson (2012) reported on a study where senior managers at a university decided to radically change the organisational model to respond to the fast-changing market and remain financially sustainable. Findings indicated that internal and external stakeholders were inadequately informed and unprepared for the radical change that took place in a short period.

The overall findings indicated that senior management and stakeholders had to reconsider the notion of a university. Whilst universities function as service-based public institutions, they increasingly have to operate like businesses. I argue that this conceptualisation of a university as a business is difficult to reconcile with the idea of a university as a knowledge institution. Galea et al. (2015) described a radical curriculum renewal project that took place in a health programme. Although being described as radical, it was a planned change and staff and students were deeply involved in every step of the curriculum renewal process. Commitment from senior management, broad ownership and buy-in, dedicated financial, political, and moral support, as well as numerous opportunities for open communication and respectful dialogue were identified as key success factors. The bulk of the research on radical change at universities focused on changes in institutionalised processes and the impact of the institutionalised environment on these changes.

1.7.5 Sense-making

The essence of sense-making theory is the interpretation of information and the construction of meaning. Interpretation involves the development or application of ways of comprehending the meaning of information; it entails the fitting of information into some structure for understanding and action (Gioia, 1986). The focus of sense-making is on the process through which social actors give meaning to past experiences that enables them to comprehend, understand, explain, attribute, extrapolate and structure the unknown through making sense of the past (Weick, 1995, Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld, 2005). Sense-making is an ongoing, retrospective cognitive process of organising and rationalising what actors are doing, in so doing turning organisational circumstances into words and salient categories. Sense-making can lead to insights that inform the identity and actions of institutional actors, thus influencing and determining human behaviour (Mills, 2003; Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld, 2005).

Research published around sense-making focuses on different areas, including higher education. Where the work of researchers such as Russell and Pirolli focused on human-computer interaction; the work of Dervin was largely related to Information Science, whilst researchers such as Weick and Gioia focused on organisational studies (Dervin, 2003; Pirolli, and Russell, 2011; Weick, 1995). In Degn's (2015) study of sense-making in higher education, she distinguished between three types of managers: those that absorb change, the translators of change and the initiators of change. Of significance is that the sense-making strategies of these

groups differ. Whilst absorbers of change tend to preserve values and aim to retain these values, translators of change try to preserve whilst evolving and initiators of change legitimise change when having a negative experience of the past. Marshall (2016) used quality as a sense-making tool, claiming that education is too complex and too significant to be reduced to limited performance indicators measured by a small group of actors. Education must be experienced through on-going dialogues challenging self-satisfaction and the *status quo*. Weber and Glynn (2006) and Malsch et al. (2012) who researched sense-making and decisions made during change, found that decisions are influenced by institutionalised processes and institutional cultures. According to Zilber (2007), sense-making plays a role in steering disruptive processes. Gonzalez (2008) explored the process of sense-making during the implementation of an academic tracking system. The findings point towards the importance of framing policy changes in such a manner that social actors, responsible for implementation, can take ownership thereof. This is done by involving these social actors in decision-making and by providing learning opportunities to facilitate and guide sense-making.

Scholars mostly agree on what prompts sense-making but there are divergent views on how it should be done, its temporal orientation and the degree to which it is personalised. Sense-making is described on a continuum, with individual cognition on the one end and a social discursive process informed by a community level of analysis on the other. Whilst most scholars regard sense-making as a retrospective process, others are of the view that it can also be a prospective process (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014). Based on the different definitions of sense-making, this study seeks to portray sense-making as neither an individual nor a highly social process, but rather a symbiotic relationship of both. Sense-making becomes a way for actors to interact and interpret to make sense of a lived experience and also account for their personal experience of reality, whilst this process feeds into the way organisational change is steered.

Ancona (2011) underscored the value of sense-making for leadership, arguing that it enables leaders to have a better grasp of what is happening in their institutions, leading to better decision-making, visioning, and inventing. Sense-making is also a courageous task as it requires from change agents to admit what did not work.

1.7.6 #FeesMustFall

#FeesMustFall is a student-led protest movement that was initiated in 2015 at public universities in South Africa, as a reaction to rising tuition fees. The movement demanded lower tuition fees as well as an increase in the government funding of universities. Starting at the University of Witwatersrand it spread to the University of Cape Town and Rhodes University before rapidly spreading to universities across the country. The 2015 protests ended with the government announcing that there will be no tuition fee increase for 2016. Protests flared up again in 2016 when an 8% increase was recommended by the government for the following budget cycle. The #FeesMustFall movement became a platform for voicing many other demands and was characterised by violence, intimidation, and the burning of vehicles and university infrastructure. At the end of 2017, the president announced that higher education will be free. This announcement was done less than a month before the start of the new academic year in which the decision had to be implemented.

1.8 Contributions of the study

Luescher (2016) stresses the importance and need for sense-making of the South African fee protests to expose the underlying driving forces. Chalufu (2018) alludes that very little is known about the experiences of academic and support staff and that leaves a gap in terms of sense-making and understanding the impact on the legitimacy of higher education institutions. Whilst numerous institutional theorists offer insight into processes that explain stability, fewer studies focus on explaining institutional change and the vast majority of definitions imply a stable social order (Khan, 2018; Lepsius, 2017; Lounsbury and Crumley, 2007). Seo and Creed (2002) also confirm that not enough research has been conducted to comprehensively and systematically explain the sources of institutional contradictions and under what conditions those contradictions force or motivate embedded actors to take collective action for institutional change. Also, Huy, Corley and Kraatz (2014) found that existing theories and research seem to mainly focus on the early stages of the radical change process and give insufficient attention to the challenges that change agents face during its later stages - especially implementation. Very few studies focus on radical change at universities.

The contribution of this paper lies in enhancing the understanding of the sense-making of legitimacy during radical organisational change at universities. This is an important area to research since an informed analysis of the multifaceted dynamics that enable senior university

managers to steer radical change can provide valuable insight for future leaders and advance the scholarly discussion on sense-making and institutional theory.

1.9 Organisation of the thesis

This thesis is structured into six chapters. In chapter one, the thesis is introduced. It provides the reader with a background on the purpose, relevance and significance of the study, the research questions are framed and key terms are defined.

Chapter two focuses on a review of the literature by firstly elaborating on institutional theory and the institutionalisation of universities as well as the rational myths that contextualise legitimacy judgements. Subsequently, radical change is analysed as an integral part of the institutionalisation process by considering what it is and its potential impact on the institution. I then proceed to explore sense-making as an approach to understand legitimacy as an integral part of institutionalisation. The final part of the chapter outlines the evolvement of universities as highly institutionalised organisations over time.

Chapter three continues to describe the context of the South African higher education system with a specific focus on the institutionalisation of these universities and the sequence of events that led to the period of radical change. South Africa's higher education institutions are embroiled in a process of change and transformation motivated by the need to overcome past inequalities and find their voice. The chapter commences with a brief overview of the development of universities during apartheid. A synopsis of the development of universities after the first democratic election and the subsequent implementation of a performance-based funding framework in 2004 are then provided This is followed by a detail discussion of the impact of the funding framework on universities. The final section of the chapter describes the institutionalised practices that were challenged during the fee protests.

Chapter four outlines the research methodology and methods used for this study. Chapter four elucidates on constructivism as the research paradigm and the differences between a positivist and constructivist approach are discussed, confirming constructivism as an applicable approach for this study. The ontological and epistemological assumptions that underpin the study are described and a motivation for the selection of phenomenology as the research methodology is provided. The research methods are outlined as well as a detailed description of how meaning

is constructed through data analysis. The chapter concludes with a description of the ethical considerations as well as the steps taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the research.

Chapter five presents the data gathered from the mixed research methods as described in the previous chapter. It then proceeds with elucidating on the data structures that were compiled by following established techniques for thematic data analysis. This chapter also explores the rational myths that were challenged during the radical change process. The second part of the chapter focuses on the analysis of the metaphors used by participants. The final part of the chapter contains a discussion on the findings of each of the sub-questions.

Chapter six is the final chapter of this thesis and the purpose is to synthesise the discussions in the foregoing chapters in the context of the original aims and purpose of the study. The theoretical implications, the practical implications as well as the policy implications of this study are discussed. A framework of sense-making of legitimacy during radical change is presented as part of the findings. The chapter concludes with the limitations of the study as well as areas for future research.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this chapter is to conceptualise the processes and influences that lead to the gradual formation of organisations to institutions and to learn how radical change is enabled or disabled by entrenched institutionalised practices. I seek to understand how practices and structures became institutionalised at public universities. When analysing the research results in Chapter 5, this theoretical underpinning will enhance the retrospective sense-making.

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first section provides a deeper theoretical insight into institutional theory and the importance of legitimacy as part of institutionalisation. Subsequently, a summary is provided of research related to radical change to comprehend the impact of radical change on institutions. Radical change is defined by considering what it is and its importance in understanding organisational responses. This is followed by an overview of sense-making; a social constructionist and interpretive process used by change agents to retrospectively construct meaning. Throughout, the discussion draws on examples and illustrative materials from the higher education environment since it is the focus of this study.

The second part of the chapter then moves to universities as institutions. The history of universities as well as the institutionalised environment in which universities function, are outlined. The establishment of institutionalised practices at higher education institutions is described. The discussion takes a holistic view of universities as a collective term and does not focus on a specific university. The specific context of South African public universities is discussed in Chapter three.

2.1 Institutional theory

Institutional theory is particularly prominent in helping scholars to understand and define state and societal institutions (Steinmo and Thelen, 1998). Scott (1987) highlights the following three salient features of institutional theory: (i) the impact of institutional context on behaviour, (ii) the formation of “templates for organising” or archetypes for doing things and the emergence of isomorphism and convergence in organisations, and (iii) the promotion of inertia rather than willingness to change. Subsequently, the scholarship was redirected towards institutional entrepreneurship and institutional change. Studies aimed at understanding change and the concept of embedded agency then emerged in the organisational field, which also became

closely intertwined with institutional logic (Battilana, Leca, and Boxenbaum, 2009; Hardy and Maguire, 2008). Greenwood and Hinings (1996) classify institutional theory as a tool to explain similarity and not focus necessarily on organisational change. DiMaggio and Powell (1991) support this notion by observing that institutionalists were not paying attention to the development of institutions, and especially not to institutional change. I, however, concur with the view of Dougherty (1994) that institutional theory provides a rich basis for analysing organisational change and allows for a focus on the contextual dynamics that precipitate the need for change.

2.1.1 Old versus neo-institutionalism

Since institutional theory is the lens through which radical change is studied, it is important to unpack my understanding of the evolvement of universities into highly institutionalised organisations. Of particular importance is how the institutionalised nature of universities became prominent during radical change. The development of institutional theory is discussed, followed by the critical look at how these theoretical developments impacted the development of universities.

Old institutionalism focuses on the study of political institutions and institutions of government and state from a comparative perspective. The behavioural revolution brought new perspectives and old institutionalism was criticised for being too narrow and being descriptive, a-theoretical, and parochial. As the focus was on descriptive accounts of institutions and laws, it failed to acknowledge the contributory roles that institutions played in society. The importance of meaning systems, symbolic elements, regulatory processes, and governance systems were increasingly recognised by social scientists. Neo-institutionalism arose in the 1970s and 1980s as a response to the perceived society-centric character of social sciences. Initial interpretations of the theory of new institutionalism focused on isomorphism and legitimating, but a noteworthy body of research also demonstrated a strong and sustained interest in agency and change.

New institutionalism, also called neo-institutionalism combines the work of researchers that focused on institutional rules and structures, with that of behaviour scholars. Neo-institutionalism posits the functioning of institutions is influenced by other institutions and to flourish organisations do not only have to survive economically, but they also have to establish legitimacy within the world of institutions (Stinchcombe, 1997; Selznick, 1996). The focal point

of attention of old-institutionalism is collective action whilst neo-institutionalism is more inductive and focuses on the independent individual (Nureev, 2005; Rhodes, 2009). Scott (1987) observed that convergence developed amongst social scientists around old and new institutionalism. Neo-institutionalism does not discard old institutionalism, but should rather be seen as the coming together of the old and new institutionalism (Scott, 1997).

Thelen (1999) summarises the main difference between old and new institutionalism as the materialist versus the normative or idealist view of institutions. Neo-institutionalism extents the notion of institutions beyond formal structures. The central argument of neo-institutionalism is that institutions shape action as an action does not take place in a vacuum. Whereas the role of the values is central to old institutionalism, neo-institutionalism is directed more towards cognitive processes. Where old institutionalism emphasised the value of influence, coalition, competing values and power, new institutionalism underscores genuineness, the connections between organisational fields and the centrality of classifications, routines, scripts, and outlines. Neo-institutionalists argued against the social reduction of institutions. Neo-institutionalism is analytic and not descriptive; it wants to explain things and not just describe them (Greenwood and Hinings, 1996). It does not seek to understand institutions as such, but rather the role they play in the production of social phenomena – such as public policies, economic development, and democracy. Neo-institutionalism emphasises the importance of a normative reference framework and the behavioural rules that are used to guide, constrain, and create power within organisations. Cognitive structures, activities, normative and regulative rules, and frameworks are seen as giving meaning to social behaviour. Neo-institutionalism views institutions as autonomous from society and self-interested agents. This view then sees institutional actors sometimes in opposition and at times in alliance with various social actors, in its efforts to maximise revenue, power resources and legitimacy. Tolbert (1997) adds that new institutionalism uses the individuality of actors as a principle to explain the results of other human actors and their interaction in the structures to legitimate institutions.

Secondly, neo-institutionalism understands institutions as constraining or enabling structures that limit, condition, and direct social agency. Neo- institutionalism is interested in discovering how the internal organisation of institutions affects the capacity of various actors to realise their goals. The focus is to try and understand the problem of structure and agency within a particular field of inquiry. Neo-institutionalism holds a broad view of institutions as social structures with

sets of formal and informal rules and practices that structure the thinking and preferences of actors.

2.1.2 Institutionalisation

It is important to understand the relationship between social actors and their environment as this has a direct bearing on senior managers at universities. Society is a human product but also an objective reality. Along similar lines, a person is also a social product and together they comprise the paradox where a person is capable of producing a world that he or she then experiences as something other than a human product (Berger and Luckmann, 1967). As explicated by Berger and Luckmann (1967) and Wuthnow et al. (1984) institutionalisation involves three phases: externalisation, objectivation, and internalisation. Externalisation takes place when embedded actors take action and then collectively interpret their actions as having an external reality separate from themselves. The objectivated world is then internalised by the actors which will reach an internalisation stage where they regulate the subjective structures of consciousness itself. When some organisational elements become institutionalised, that is, when they are widely understood to be appropriate and necessary components of efficient, rational organisations, organisations are under considerable pressure to incorporate these elements into their formal structure to maintain legitimacy. By doing so, an organisation demonstrates that its actions are based on a collective purpose, executed properly and adequately (Meyer and Rowan, 1977).

2.1.2.1 Environmental institutionalisation

Universities function within a higher education landscape and relevance of the landscape to the study is alluded to in this section. A growing acknowledgement of the prevalent importance of external institutionalisation on the structuring and functioning of organisations has evolved (Scott, 2004). A single organisation is likely to operate simultaneously in numerous institutional environments. Research conducted by Scott (2004) concentrated on macro perspectives and examined the effect of wider environmental structures on organisations. The role of unions and normative associations such as professional affiliations are highlighted as pertinent in shaping the work of organisations. Along similar lines, the role of regulative agents including governmental organisations, legislation, and court decisions also impact the structure and activities of organisations. These regulative agents can also include international systems.

Meyer et al. (1981) emphasised that institutional environments are not monolithic and can put conflicted, competing, or fragmented and varied demands on organisations. Research findings from Mezias (1995) indicates that compliance with regulations will vary as a function of the resources devoted to enforcement. Subsequently, the response of an organisation to the demands of the external environment will vary depending on which forces are more likely to evoke strategic retorts - such as surveillance and sanctioning.

2.1.2.2 Organisational institutionalisation

Institutional pressure forces organisations to adopt similar practices or structures to gain legitimacy and support (Di Maggio and Powell, 1983). Over time, these rules become rational myths, meaning they become taken-for-granted and are sometimes not even directly associated anymore with the values that led to its formation. These rational myths or elaborated shared belief systems then become rationalised and detached prescriptions that identify various social purposes and specify in a rule like way, the appropriate means to follow them. Their existence and efficacy go undisputed and is in some measure beyond the discretion of any individual actor or organisation. Formal structures produced in response to institutional demands are routinely decoupled from technical work processes (Meyer and Rowan, 1977, Meyer et al., 1981). As a result of decoupling, the structure of many modern organisations is a product not only of coordinative demands imposed by complex technologies but also of rationalised norms legitimising the adoption of appropriate structural models. The fact that these rational myths are then widely shared, strengthens the perceived reality and individuals acting upon them presuppose that they have been granted the right to do so (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Scott, 2004; Zucker, 1987). DiMaggio and Powell (1983) took these ideas forward by exploring three mechanisms — coercive, normative, and mimetic — by which institutional demands are diffused.

More specifically, Meyer, Scott, and Deal (1981) propose that actions should be understood as the performing of broad institutional scripts. Actions such as academic exclusion and exclusions based on outstanding fees have been institutionalised at public universities, using the guiding principles of academic performance and financial sustainability. With institutionalisation, both actions and roles are described so that certain actions come to be associated with certain classes of actors; e.g., lecturers prepare assessments and students complete them.

2.1.3 Institutionalisation of universities

Institutions cannot be created instantaneously; they always have a history; of which they are the product. It is impossible to understand an institution adequately without understanding the historical processes in which it was produced as well as the reciprocal actions that took place during a shared history. In the next section, a brief overview of the institutionalisation of universities is provided. This serves as the foundation for the discussion of legitimacy and sense-making during radical change.

During the 19th century, across the world, nations started constructing school systems and governmental administrative units and ministries of education emerged (Cabal, 1993; Wierzbowski, 1988). Over time, university management structures evolved from the traditional committee systems employed by universities, to a democratised system where inputs are sought from the proletarian in the governance of many African universities. The aforementioned includes many stakeholders and today, alumni, donors, academic and support staff as well as students have a vote on various university structures. The inclusion of student leadership in governance structures has been institutionalised at public universities in South Africa.

The history of universities shows that universities are slow to change and rooted in cultural, economic, and political history. The institutional framework that universities operate in is characterised by practices such as the setting of time tables, packaging of courses in a study programme, formal examinations, and awarding of degrees at graduation ceremonies - a direct inheritance from the middle ages. Universities often prolong and stereotype ideas and modes of thought for a century or more after the rest of the world has given them up (Cabal, 1993; Rashdall, 1936). The foundations of scientific culture of today's world are laid in universities. The university is an institution of science, and science is institutionalised within the university. Disciplined thinking and systematic investigation enabled the rise of the natural sciences and of the technical evolution (Cabal, 1993). The conception of the university as an institution is essentially medieval, and many of the same practices and rituals prevail in modern universities. University autonomy is built on the rationality criteria that the search for truth depended more on the exegesis of texts than on scientific discovery. This dedication to intellectual discovery has earned the university social as well as state recognition of its autonomy.

The educational system represents a highly institutionalised context and has a higher impact on social behaviour than do specific organisational boundaries. As an example, the association of a university with a physical location has been institutionalised over centuries. After the movement to build structures for universities in the 14th century in Europe, the idea of a university as a physical space and place has taken shape and gradually led to many universities being the size of small cities. Today the words *university* and *campus* are used interchangeably. Many universities have 'open days' where potential students are allowed to view the campuses, laboratories, libraries, technical resources, sports facilities, and modern buildings. Similarly, the grouping of study programmes in faculties, the appointment of faculty members in a single discipline-specific school; to teach at one place; to assign a calculated period of notional hours to a learning outcome, to complete a course with a final examination, to receive a certificate at a formal function, are all unquestioned norms (Husen, 1991; Rashdall, 1936). Linked to universities rooted in history - practices, symbols and cultural values prevail at universities, encapsulated under "university traditions". Institutionalisation should not be linked to a distinctive process purely by definition and the next section explores the variety of processes that cause organisational change in behaviour, processes or structure to conform to rational myths.

Organisations do not necessarily conform to a set of established beliefs because they constitute reality or are taken for granted, but often because they are rewarded for doing so through increased legitimacy, resources, and survival capabilities (Meyer and Rowan, 1977). It is through the exchange of ideas and behavioural structures that a legitimate order is established (Weber, 1978; Watts and Mead, 2005). Lepsius (2017) proposed that institutionalisation takes place in a five-dimensional framework, consisting of the development of ideas into rationality criteria, the differentiation of validity contexts, the means to sanction, the externalisation of problems not covered by the institution, and the establishment of conflict and mediation processes between different institutions (Lepsius, 2017; Weber, 1978). The first four dimensions are subsequently described in a university context. The implementation of these dimensions will be discussed in Chapter 3.

2.1.3.1 Development of rationality criteria

During the process of the institutionalisation of a certain value, ideas become behavioural maxims applicable to different social actors, although these actors have their own motives and

interests. Certain social behaviour is structured by setting long-term criteria, rules, and procedures in such a way that the behaviour becomes independent of individual motivations. As a result, social behaviour becomes calculable, predictable, and inter-subjectively controllable (Lepsius, 2017; Weber, 1978). These behavioural maxims can be defined as rationality criteria because following them in a given context of action is considered appropriate for the achievement of a legitimate guiding principle. For example, the maxim of university ranking is nowadays considered rational for indicating university credibility. Anyone who does not follow this maxim behaves "irrationally," even though there might be valid reasons for such behaviour. In this context, the judgement of behaviour takes place against the general claim of validity of the rationality criterion that exists for ranking. In the course of institutionalisation, values and guiding principles are authenticated by the development of rationality criteria that are then regarded as legitimate for action in a specific situation. Those who represent institutions behave in line with the rationality criteria and in so doing, make these institutions as well as their actions predictable for larger groups of the society. Based on the resulting trust-building and orientation processes, institutions influence the behaviour of internal and external stakeholders as well (Meyer 1977; Meyer and Rowan 1977; Meyer et al., 1981).

It should be noted that different guiding principles do not all have the same priority. Drawing on the insights of early social theorists such as Durkheim (1961); Weber (1978), Berger and Luckmann (1967) and Meyer and Rowan (1977), social order is a product of social norms and rules that empower social actors and specify ways in which they can take action. Such behaviours are not so much socially influenced as socially constructed. For example, various findings point towards research being more valued and given priority over teaching, supported by external ranking, funding opportunities and internal promotion criteria of universities that are skewed towards research. Henceforth ambiguity exists in terms of time allocation between teaching and research (Chen, 2015; Du, 2002).

2.1.3.2 Differentiation of validity contexts

The effectiveness of a rationality criterion is dependent on the appropriate structure and context of the situation in which the action takes place. Rationality criteria, with which an action is supposed to align itself, are not abstract but bound to a demarcated action context. Henceforth

the specification of a guiding idea must include a context for determining its validity and the orientation for social action becomes restricted to aspects that can be treated in line with the rationality criteria (Lepsius, 2017). The degree to which the behaviour in a certain context is detached from another action situation becomes an essential element of an institutionalised process. The institutionalisation of a guiding idea is related to a social fragmentation of the real world. In a diffused action situation of social differentiation, the legitimacy power of a guiding principle will be challenged by other guiding principles also claiming validity in the same action context.

2.1.3.3 Sanctioning power of institutions

Like any behavioural regulation, an institutionalised principle also requires a sanctioning power that enforces and defends its claim to validity. The nature and extent of sanctions are crucial for institutionalised processes. Under the neo-institutional theory, an organisation tries to obtain legitimisation by creating visible, mostly symbolic policies that make a pretence that the expectations or requirements concerning the organisation are met (MacLean and Behnam, 2010). Universities maintain legitimacy because of the good track record of the employment of graduates. Bils and Klenow (2000); Chapman and Ryan (2005); Friedman (2005) and Temple (2000) all agree that graduates benefit through higher lifetime earnings whilst the state is likely to benefit from tax contributions as well as increased economic activity. Highly skilled actors are more likely to introduce technological change and drive innovation, both key drivers of economic transformation. Economic activity also reduces unemployment and contributes to a healthier society at large (Erfort, Erfort, and Zbarazskaya, 2016; Jongbloed, 2010). Economic activities highlight the value of higher education and its role in improving the quality of life.

2.1.3.4 Externalisation of contingencies

The externalisation of problems and contingencies contributes to homogenising the orientation for social action in a defined social context. Actions taken by a university will be based on the applicable rationality criteria and will only deal with the problems that occur in the respective action context. Problems beyond these criteria will be externalised. This implies that the action context is reduced and specific value orientations and action structuring become dominant. According to Meyer and Rowan (1977) organisational isomorphism is a contributing factor to externalisation, where some formal aspects of reality arise in an attempt to rationalise the pressure of the environment, assure legitimisation, and

avoid sanctions.

2.2 Legitimacy of institutions

Legitimacy is defined by an actor's perception of the institution. The legitimation of actors and institutions is not only bestowed by beliefs held by social and political actors but also as a result of social practices and discursive processes in an attempt to justify the policies, actions and ultimately the existence of an institution (Reus-Smit, 2007). Legitimacy claims are constantly evaluated by actors and legitimacy can be gained or lost (Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). However, legitimacy cannot be extracted; it is bestowed upon an institution through the construction and interpretation of multifaceted dimensions of the institution. Legitimacy is not only inherently social, but also political. Legitimacy is not a constant state but a condition that is constantly evaluated and claims are often contested whilst actors and institutions are challenged with de-legitimation attempts. In this way, legitimacy cannot be seen as an operational resource, but rather a set of subjective and vital beliefs (Suchman, 1995). It is important to consider how legitimacy is constituted and to identify the different forms of legitimacy and factors that impact the legitimacy judgements that collectively constitute the legitimacy of an institution.

Universities tend to treat legitimacy as a strategic resource, focusing on moral and cognitive legitimacy, as the purpose of providing education is associated with providing a better future. Tost (2011) defines legitimacy as the judgment that an entity is appropriate for its context. Legitimacy also refers to the capacity of the system to create and maintain the belief that the existing ways of running the university, structures, and processes are the most appropriate for all stakeholders (Tost, 2011). One critical outcome of such judgment is the decision to accept existing power structures and obey managerial directives. According to institutional theory, actors and organisations are constantly engaged in a quest for legitimacy. One can also argue that it is also the quest for legitimacy which produces institutions. Any initiative that depends on the active cooperation of its stakeholders requires legitimacy, thus stakeholders need to perceive or assume that the actions of an organisation are desirable, proper, and appropriate. Although legitimacy is required for all organisations, it is of particular importance for public universities, as higher education is perceived as both a public and a private good. They rely on private (payment of fees from individuals) and public (subsidy from the government) financial support more heavily compared to other types of organisations. The explicit dependency

between the payment of tuition fees and access to higher education, emphasises the problem of maintaining legitimacy and support from the public in setting tuition fees.

Ensuring legitimacy is important when designing, implementing, and enforcing regulatory structures and processes. Recent conceptual advances in the literature on legitimacy judgments have stressed the importance of looking at the content of legitimacy judgments (Bitektine, 2011; Tost, 2011). Legitimacy deals with the notion that actors develop habits and views when performing procedures and subsequently, those procedures tend to achieve an established, value-impregnated status. However, inside the university, other interests and values claim to be valid as well. The university is also an employer, an education agency, and a part of the healthcare, innovation, and legal system. It is, therefore, an organisation in the service of other institutions (Meyer et al., 1981; Scott, 2004).

The dimensions of legitimacy are widely discussed in the literature and have led to the development of several classifications or typologies (Díez-de-Castro et al., 2018; Scott, 1997; Suchman, 1995; Bitektine, 2011). The variety of topologies of legitimacy resulted from different schools of research and the growing contribution of various disciplines to the study of the legitimacy of institutions. Over time, emerging characteristics of legitimacy were added and it became clear that the boundaries between the different forms of legitimacy are elusive and influenced by the respective social actors and the external environment. A range of issues contribute to legitimacy formation and each type of legitimacy rests on different behavioural dynamics.

The sources of information used in making legitimacy judgements are important. According to Tost (2011) internal and external stakeholders tend to consider legitimacy in a more passive mode through the combination of two other cognitive processes - taking validity cues and cultural association. Taking validity cues means to base one's judgement solely on the endorsement of other observers. Legitimacy judgements are done in a passive mode to minimise cognitive processing efforts (Tost, 2011; Lieberman, 2003). Cultural associations are often found in highly institutionalised organisations, where practices are accepted because they are culturally taken-for-granted as good, familiar, and non-problematic. These institutions are more prone to unplanned radical change, as the need for change is not equally understood and embraced by all stakeholders. Few scholars have provided a theoretical framework that

comprehensively and systematically explains the sources of institutional legitimacy of universities and under what conditions those claims are challenged and can lead to conflict, forcing embedded agents to take collective action for institutional change (Clark, 1983; Jansen, 2017(b)).

For this study the following legitimacy types are explored: organisational, performance, normative, public, empirical, moral, leadership, managerial and pragmatic legitimacy. A summary of the understanding and interpretation of these different forms of legitimacy within the higher education environment follows next.

2.2.1 Types of legitimacy

Organisational legitimacy is defined as a status conferred by external interested parties (Díez-de-Castro et al., 2018; Pfeffer and Salancik, 1978). A legitimate organisation is one whose values and actions are congruent with external values and expectations for action. Having a range of social, intellectual, and educational purposes, ranging from vocationally oriented training to blue-sky research, universities cannot use simple measures such as profit for performance. Graduates have a lifetime association with their alma mater and tend to associate a university with the values and traditions that prevailed during their time as a student. Since these relations do not exist in the private sector and other non-university settings, there are unique challenges associated with changes at universities that are not well understood. Adding to Weber's (1978) interpretation of sociology and the framework of Lepsius (2019), all forms of institutional differentiation of universities require legitimation for the institutionalised university as well as for those who do not belong to the institutionalised context but have to bear the externalised costs of the institutional differentiation.

Normative legitimacy is also referred to as socio-political normative- and political regulatory legitimacy (Scott, 1995; Zimmerman and Zeitz, 2002). Whilst some researchers include moral legitimacy under the broader term, normative legitimacy, I treat them as separate legitimacy types. Normative legitimacy refers to all cultural regulatory processes and not just an assessment of right or wrong. Moral legitimacy goes beyond doing no harm and operating within the law, it also touches on social justice. Regulatory legitimacy stems from the fact that organisations are institutionalised because they are regulated by regimes or authorities through the establishment of rules, standards, laws, and endorsements that force them to act and behave in

a certain way. This will typically be cascaded down in the organisation through norms, compliance or sanctions. Regulatory legitimacy is enhanced when an organisation's actions conform to the standards established by the authorities. These authorities can include governmental, professional associations, stakeholders, or other powerful organisations (Díez-de-Castro et al., 2018; Scott, 1995).

Change agents join an organisation with a cognitive bias and make decisions based on personal values. Therefore, moral legitimacy and personal legitimacy are closely related. Suchman (1995) proposes that personal legitimacy is a dimension of moral legitimacy. Researchers such as Carroll (1979) and Patten (1992) focused on social legitimacy as an aspect of ethical legitimacy, referring to the ethical responsibility of institutions to reveal or share information on social issues. Moral legitimacy is strengthened when institutions seem to defend and pursue socially accepted principles and values. At the same time, social legitimacy is enhanced when institutions express their concern about social issues. These principles are guided by the ethical framework in which the organisation operates. Public legitimacy is derived from normative and moral legitimacy as it is the judgement that is assigned to moral legitimacy when the content analysis of the media is used for its measurement (Deephouse and Carter, 2005).

Pragmatic legitimacy, also coined instrumental or resource legitimacy occurs when stakeholders attain their objectives through the institutions. Stakeholders receive something that holds value, whilst putting certain obligations on the institutions. Pragmatic legitimacy is strengthened when the interests of internal and external forces are balanced within the institution.

A fundamental difference between moral and pragmatic legitimacy is that moral legitimacy does not consider personal benefit, but rather focus on whether it is the right thing to do, whereas pragmatic legitimacy has a more selfish nuance, focusing on whether personal goals can be obtained through the institution, that is, the extent to which the particular interest of a social actors or group of actors are represented (Suchman, 1995). There is an overlap between resource legitimacy and pragmatic legitimacy as resource legitimacy is strengthened when value is created for a particular interest group. Suchman (1995) added another dimension – that of influence legitimacy. The common denominator in resource-, pragmatic- and influence-legitimacy is that the "compensation" or benefit for social actors, is not necessarily agreed upon but exists in the minds of social actors as an expected value or benefit, responsive to their larger

interests. Thus, pragmatic legitimacy is dependent on the influence or interaction between society and the organisation (Botetzagias and Koutiva, 2014).

Several types of legitimacy are based on the performance of change agents and less on overall institutional views. Professional legitimacy is grounded in respect for the principles and values that guide good management, both at the operational-, managerial- and strategic levels (Ruef and Scott, 1998). Along similar veins, managerial legitimacy or output legitimacy occurs when change agents can demonstrate to social actors and stakeholders that decisive steps are taken to achieve their vision and fulfil their mission. Clearly articulated action plans towards the achievement of the strategic objectives strengthen output legitimacy. Managerial legitimacy involves mechanisms such as personnel management, accounting practices and the rules of conduct and structure of the administrative staff (Ruef and Scott, 1998). Output legitimacy is strengthened when an institution reports its performance and achievements to its stakeholders. Performance should be reported against the mission and vision and can be measured over a long period (Suchman, 1995).

Walker and Zelditch (1993) emphasise the importance of leadership legitimacy. (Keyes et al., 2000) and (Kanter, 1983) concluded that institutions where leadership legitimacy is high tend to be associated with the positive well-being of employees. Leadership legitimacy, in turn, tends to increase a change agent's ability to influence the behaviours of other social actors. A change agent's power is derived through the support of social actors, that can include, peers, subordinates, and external stakeholders. Social actors tend to follow a directive more readily when it is received from a change agent with leadership legitimacy. Leadership legitimacy is strengthened not so much by the change agent's position but also by his or her social position and behaviour. Whilst a position itself may be seen as legitimate by some, the incumbent in that position may lack legitimacy.

Technical and professional legitimacy are strengthened when the actions of the institutions are perceived as beneficial because they are efficient, quality assurance mechanisms are in place, innovation is involved and sufficient training and support are provided to staff (Ruef and Scott, 1998; Suchman, 1995). Instrumental legitimacy is present when the actions of change agents are perceived as facilitating individual or group attempts to reach self-defined or internalised goals such as perceptions related to the effectiveness, efficiency, or utility of the entity.

Legitimacy is acquired through a multifaceted process between stakeholders (legitimiser) and institutions (legitimisee). Dagher (2018) asserted that performance legitimacy is met when stakeholders perceive that some or all of their basic needs are met - it is therefore a derivative of delivered outputs. Performance legitimacy is being given meaning by multiple actors through their influence on the flow of resources and through an institution's right to institute a governance system and command power based on its performance (Powell and Colyvas, 2008; Tilling, 2004). According to Li, Chen, and Ma (2016), a positive relationship exists between reputation and performance legitimacy. The stakeholders of public universities are those groups or individuals affected by the university's undertakings and services, and whose actions can affect the ability of the university to efficaciously implement its strategy and achieve its goals.

The multifaceted character of legitimacy implies that it will operate differently in different contexts, and its measurement may depend on the nature of the institution and the contextual environment. Legitimacy for public universities is different from those of profit organisations. Focusing on profit-driven organisations, a legitimate organisation will most likely be described as efficient, whereas a positive organisation is an efficient and constructive producer of profit over time. The business of public universities can be defined as the production, dissemination, translation, and use of ideas, and the cultivation of education, scholarship, and students (Keyes et al., 2000**;** Ruben, Immordino, and Tromp, 2009).

Despite this proliferation of legitimacy types, what remains unchanged is that organisational legitimacy is a central concept in institutional theory (DiMaggio and Powell, 1983; Meyer and Rowan, 1977; Deephouse and Carter, 2005). Furthermore, legitimacy is based on (i) the perception (subjective judgement) of internal social actors and other stakeholders; (ii) the assumption as to what actions of an organisation will be considered correct, fair, and appropriate; and (iii) an evaluation of the role that an organisation plays in society. The judgements made by social actors and other stakeholders are based on combined input as received from data and perceptions.

To summarise; although these different types of legitimacies do not constitute a strict hierarchy, they do reflect three important underlying distinctions. First, some forms of legitimacy depend on the self-interest of social actors, whereas other forms of legitimacy involve larger cultural

rules (Suchman, 1995). Secondly, at times, legitimacy is measured against its effect on an individual whereas, at other times, legitimacy is measured against its influence on a group. Finally, some forms of legitimacy are more focused on an actor's performance whereas other forms of legitimacy focus on institutional performance.

2.2.2 Legitimacy judgements of change agents

Although the legitimacy of a manager is not tied to a position, competence plays a significant role in establishing managerial legitimacy. The perceived competence becomes more important than the authority assigned to the position. Bitektine (2011) found that manager's prerogative to design work processes and set salary levels based on perceptions of a social actor's skills, tend to be a focus for social actors when questioning managerial legitimacy. The importance of legitimacy lies in the fact that it justifies the existence of an institution in a society (Bitektine, 2011). Max Weber (1978) has recognised that power stands in constant need of legitimation. Coupled to this is the importance of identifying the various sources of legitimacy and postulating about the process through which these sources are combined (Suchman, 1995; Tost, 2011; Tyler, 2006). Tost (2011) suggests three main categorisations of content underlying active or evaluative legitimacy judgments: instrumental and moral content that is dominantly cognitive and relational content that adds an effective dimension, showing how cognition and emotion can collectively influence the interpretation of actions and subsequent behaviour.

(Díez-de-Castro et al., 2018) argue that intentionality also plays a role during legitimation. The driving force behind a certain action influences legitimacy. A university can provide quality teaching because it wants to meet student's needs (professional legitimacy), or because it feels responsible for fulfilling its role and reporting to the community (ethical legitimacy), or because high-quality teaching attracts better students and more funding to be sustainable (managerial legitimacy).

The interpretation of decisions taken by change agents as well as the legitimacy judgements by other stakeholders are influenced by personal values. For this reason, an understanding of the values of a change agent can assist with sense-making of decisions taken during radical change (Selznick, 1996). Schwartz (1992) in his value model distinguished between four higher-order value encapsulating the following personal values: power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation, self-direction, universalism, benevolence, tradition, conformity and security. Besides the

formation of formal structures, institutional change is also influenced by social entanglements and commitments and as such values also play a role in providing the context for sense-making during institutional analysis. Change agents need to know which values matter in the context at hand; how to build them into the organisation's culture and social structure; and in what ways they are weakened or subverted (Selznick, 1996). This organisation of values according to Schwartz (1992) is illustrated in figure 2.1.

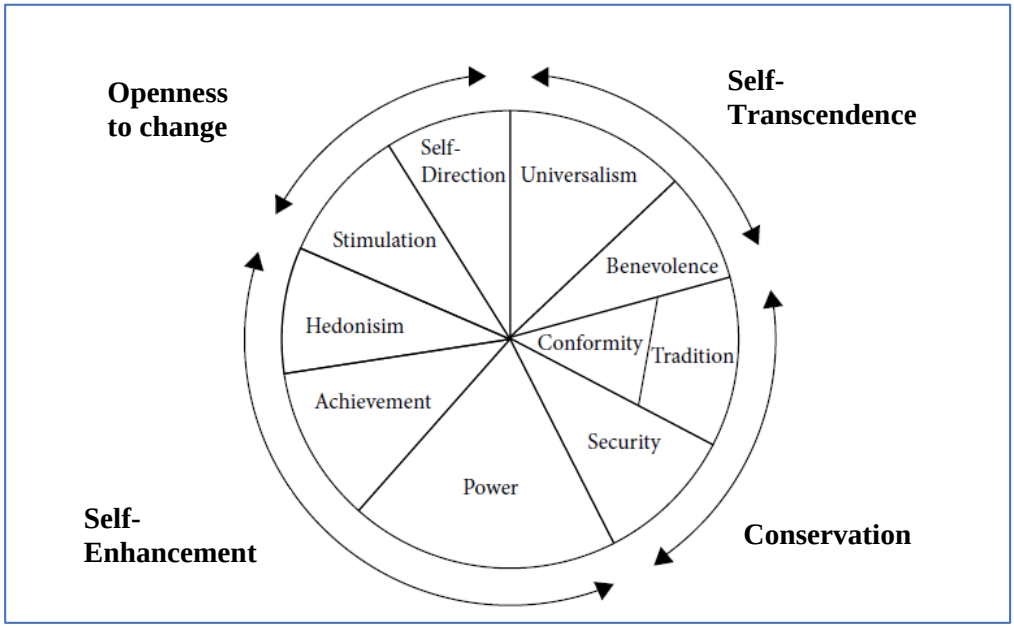


Figure 2-1 A structure of personal values, source: Schwartz (1992)

Gouveia et al. (2010) describe a model of human values based on two consensual functions: (i) values as a guide of human actions and (ii) values as an expression of human needs. The first function further differentiates between social, personal, and central value orientations, whereas the second function classifies values as either materialistic or humanitarian. Both frameworks can be useful during the sense-making of a social actor's actions (Ntuen, 2009).

In summary, personal values influence legitimacy. Relational legitimacy exists when the actor's action is perceived as affirming the social identity and self-worth of individuals or social groups and ensuring they are treated with dignity and respect. Relational legitimacy is typically associated with notions of fairness, benevolence, or communality. A judgement is perceived as legitimate on moral grounds when it is consistent with the moral and ethical values of the interested or affected parties (Lepsius, 2017). At a university, students might assume that academics are experts in their discipline (cognitive judgment). During their studies, the value

and impact of a course are evaluated (instrumental judgment); the treatment by academic and other professional staff (relational judgment) as well as their fairness and ethical behaviour (moral judgment).

2.2.3 Emotions, legitimacy, and radical change

Hay (2014) confirms the multiple and shifting base of change agent legitimacy, and empirically demonstrated how swiftly the legitimacy judgments of actors can change. Personal judgements are highly emotion-laden. Emotional reactions can trigger fast and abrupt changes in legitimacy judgments, and influence the information that becomes noticeable to other actors. Change inevitably evokes emotions. Lazarus (1991) developed an emotion theory wherein he suggests that social actors typically experience emotional reactions when appraising the significance of an event against the impact on their personal goals and fears. Beal et al. (2006) and Frijda (1993) assert that emotions are transactions between individual actors and their institutionalised environment. These transactions usually involve other social actors and subjects that have meaning for individuals. This appraisal can evoke pleasant or unpleasant emotions and directly translates into a legitimacy judgement of the actors leading the change (Gibson, 2010). Ashkanasy et al. (2017) propose a multilevel framework of emotions in organisations that encompasses emotion as a reaction within an actor, as well as a reaction between actors. Social actors can experience strong emotions even though an event does not affect them directly. They can experience group-focused or group-level emotions, for example, being joyful when their sports team wins (Smith, Seger, and Mackie, 2007).

Lazarus (1991) and Gibson (2010) have identified the following four steps of an emotional incident: (i) a precursor or activating event; (ii) an emotional response; (iii) the manifestation of the emotion determined by the intensity of the emotion and the effort at regulating the expression or behaviour; and (iv) the outcome or consequence, referring to the reaction of the individual as well as other social actors. Rothman and Melwani (2017) found that multifaceted emotions or experiencing of a range of emotions during an event can be beneficial for implementing change. Multipart emotions provide leaders with rich and varied information about their institutions, enabling them to make adaptable decisions. Also, leaders experiencing multipart emotions are more prone to be flexible and open to their followers - essential characteristics for advancing bottom-up change. If the realisation of the change is expected to positively impact on a social actor’s personal goals and values, the emotions will be more positive, whereas changes that

seem to threaten individual goals and values, will be perceived as negative (Elfenbein, 2007; Frijda, 1996; Hay, 2014; Rothman and Melwani, 2017).

Emotional reactions do not only influence legitimacy judgements but also influence a social actor's readiness to embark on the change. Emotional reactions impact both thinking and reaction. Research has under-explored how exactly emotional reactions emerge during the implementation of radical change behaviour. Rothman and Melwani (2017) also allude to the fact that different actors in varied positions in an institution may have different emotional experiences during the same event. Professional groupings, specialising in different tasks and focusing on different matters, are likely to regard some issues as more important than others, and predict particular consequences, resulting in different emotions (Vuori and Huy, 2016). Jarvis (2017) adds another dimension to emotional display by stating that emotional displays can be authentic or inauthentic as actors can feign emotional displays. The institutional hierarchy, titles, and responsibilities associated with positions bestow unequal formal status to various actors in an institution; henceforth actors may compete with one another to obtain or maintain their legitimacy. In many cases, low-status actors are likely fear higher-status individuals (Menges and Kilduff, 2015).

2.3 Sense-making

The next section focuses on sense-making as an approach to better understand radical change. Sense-making can be a useful theory during radical change. Researchers such as Heifetz et al. (2009) and Ancona (2011) confirmed its usefulness in situations that become unintelligible or where a social actor's understanding of the world becomes equivocal or unclear in some way. When the environment changes rapidly, change agents find themselves unprepared and often confronted with adaptive challenges rather than technical problems to solve (Heifetz et al., 2009). Adaptive challenges require responses outside the existing repertoire of a change agent and this often present a gap between aspiration and existing capacity. As this gap cannot be closed by existing modes of operating, sense-making is often required to move forward (Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld, 2005). Weick (1995) pointed to the challenges of environmental uncertainty, novel situations, and complex problem definitions as occasions for sense-making.

Ultimately, sense-making is intrinsically related to legitimacy as it deals with plausibility and the continued redrafting of an emerging story so that it becomes more comprehensive,

incorporates more of the observed data, and decisions become more resilient in the face of criticism. The notion that sense-making is driven by plausibility rather than accuracy conflicts with academic theories and managerial practices that claim the effectiveness of outcomes is determined by the accuracy of managers' perceptions (Weick, 1995). In addition, other theorists are of the view that 'sense' is strictly associated with the category of 'truth' as an objective property and that the truth does not have degrees of accuracy (Austen and Kapias, 2016). However, what is plausible for one group of actors, such as managers, often proves implausible for another group, such as employees or students in the case of universities. The findings of a study on culture change revealed that plausibility is enhanced when stories tap into an ongoing sense of the current climate, are consistent with other data, facilitate ongoing projects, reduce equivocality, and offer a potentially exciting future (Mills, 2003). In its simplest form, sense is generated through words, combined into sentences of conversation to convey something about a social actor's ongoing experience (Maitlis and Christianson, 2014; Weick, 1995).

Explicit efforts at sense-making tend to occur when the current state of the world is perceived to be different from the expected state. During radial change, some actors tend to look for reasons that enable them to stay in action and continue with interrupted activities. Frameworks such as institutionalised constraints, rationality criteria, strategic plans, expectations, validity claims, and traditions underpin this behaviour. Through sense-making, circumstances are unpacked, interpreted, turned into meaning, and catalysing action. Sense-making is about the interplay of action and interpretation rather than the influence of evaluation on choice. Hence the attribution falls on the compelling situational factors and contextual features that influence action instead of a focus on the individual decision-maker (Lant, 2002; Laroche, 1995; Weick, 1995).

2.3.1 Sense-making during radical change

Biazzo (2000) emphasises that radical change is not the extreme form of incremental change, it is a completely different form of change that requires a fundamental rethink of processes and systems. Incremental change relies on maintaining the basics of existing processes, products, and structures. Bessant and Caffyn (1997) assert that effective radical organisational change must progress beyond incrementalism as radical change is dependent on questioning the restrictions of the taken-for-granted institutionalised practices (Alvesson and Willmott, 2001).

The risks associated with radical change are high as it threatens existing power structures or requires process re-engineering. Social actors sometimes resist change and that may lead to failure. Waiting too long to take action, often results in reactive radical change and increases the risk of ending up with a collection of unrelated agendas instead of a composed set of coherent change strategy. Radical change creates a high degree of uncertainty in organisations as it often results in sweeping away significant parts of previous investments in technical skills, knowledge, and production techniques (Utterback, 1994). Radical change can be planned or unplanned and unplanned radical change is likely to increase organisational uncertainty. The institutionalisation of practices and the desire of social actors to fit in, and therefore not to question the underlying principles, can cause a strain. Andripoulos and Lowe (2000) stress the need for organisational leaders to continuously challenge assumptions and take a critical perspective on institutional practices. Similarly, Daniel (1999) recognizes the need for institutions to be more agile, to involve actors at the fundamental level and to establish rapid and flexible business processes.

Over the last two decades, scholars have examined many different instances of radical change and presented ample evidence supporting an agentic role of change agents (Balogun, Bartunek and Do, 2015; Wiersema and Bantel, 1992). Radical institutional change literature tends to assume that top management's authority to lead change is largely unproblematic and that they typically perform a beneficial change agent role whilst the role of middle management tends to be de-emphasised (Floyd and Wooldridge, 1992; Kanter, 1983). Relatively simple and generic prescriptions to aid change agents are suggested, such as: creating a sense of urgency and a compelling vision, performing procedural and interactional justice, promoting participation, co-opting of lower levels, and projecting leader credibility and trustworthiness (Balogun, Bartunek and Do, 2015; Kotter, 1995). Empirical research has underexplored and failed to answer how feasible or realistic it is for change agents to act successfully on these prescriptions, particularly in the context of radical institutional change (Furst and Cable, 2008).

Biazzo (2000) stresses the importance of analysis and measurement during radical change so that the change is more than a rhetoric superimposed on incrementalism. Measurements include quantifiable and non-quantifiable elements, taking cognisance of the fact that radical change often influences internal and external stakeholders, making it difficult to quantify some of the

changes. Universities can easily measure an increase in pass rate or a decrease in the dropout rate, whereas other important measurements such as staff engagement or employee involvement in decision-making may be difficult to quantify or may take a longer time to surface in quantifiable results.

Wischnevsky and Damanpour (2006) distinguish between radical strategic and radical structural changes. The top management has more control over radical structural change outcomes than over radical strategic change outcomes. Radical change is for example linked to creativity. Researchers such as Heap (1989), Gurteen (1998) and Ford (2000) advocate that creativity is essential as it enables the generation and synthesis of new ideas and concepts through the radical restructuring and the re-association of existing ideas and divergent thinking.

Moyers (2017) suggests the following criteria to assist in defining whether the change is incremental or radical: (i) the size of the gap between the future state and the current state; (ii) the difference between the future state and the current state; (iii) how much of a departure from the current state is the future state; and (iv) the scale of change in the business model.

Organisations are intrinsically human objects and henceforth, the processes that direct human thought and behaviour also drive organisations. Any attempt to analyse and understand organisational behaviour requires an understanding of the processes that guides human behaviour and decision-making (Ashkanasy et al., 2017). Sense-making can be a powerful process to construct meaning during radical change and to understand the changing legitimacy demands on institutions.

2.3.2 Sense-making properties

In the literature, several distinguishing features of sense-making are highlighted, including its social, systemic and retrospective nature; its origin in disruptive ambiguity; its initial phase of noticing and bracketing; its mixture of retrospect and prospect; and its reliance on presumptions to guide action. Sense-making has a system-wide locus and culminates in articulation that informs future action (Ancona, 2011; Colville, Brown and Pye, 2012; Maitlis and Christianson, 2014; McNamara, 2015).

The understanding of a situation is based on the social actor's insight and relationship with the world as well as the perceived role in a group. Through conversations and relationships, the social context influences meaning and sense-making. Furthermore, whilst sense-making is primarily viewed as an introspective process, it depends on a social actor's background, schooling, culture and social norms. Through interactions with social actors and a constant exchange of ideas an actor's understanding of the environment is shaped and influenced. Weick (1995) describes sense-making as a process that is constantly negotiated and intersubjective as cultural influence cannot be ignored.

From the aforementioned, it becomes evident that sense-making is retrospective. Since social actors make sense of events or data, they primarily notice past patterns and create a narrative that fits recent history, to influence future action. Two important aspects are highlighted by this retrospective action: the awareness that action is crucial for sense-making as social actors receive stimuli from their activities, and also the acknowledgement of action as an interpersonal activity (Weber and Glynn, 2006). Sense-making embeds enactment as action and learning informs further action. When social actors determine their domain of activity before taking action, they are creating their own settings for future action. Klein, Moon, and Hoffman (2006) divide sense-making into two cycles, the elaboration of a frame and reframing. Retrospective data is used to confirm or reject a selected framework.

Sense-making is an ongoing process as our relationships and interpretation of events are fluid and continuously being transformed. Although, social actors focus on a specific moment in time to codify meaning - other events, and social actors incessantly influence our worldviews. Sense-making depends on extracted cues that social actors pick up from sense and perception. Reasoning and understanding become the meaningful internal embellishment of these cues, articulated through dialogue and writing. Through this, social actors, add to their repertoire of retrospective experience (Ancona, 2011).

Most organisational decisions are based on reasonable expectations of a positive outcome and mitigating risks, using change agents' imperfect cognitive and perceptual resources available for action in a specific situation, in a specific context, at a specific time. Action is based on plausibility rather than accuracy. Trying to be too factual and analytical, can result in analysis–paralysis instead of being progress-centred. The aforementioned are all important aspects of

sense-making during the reciprocal interaction of information seeking, meaning ascription, and taking action (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991).

2.3.3 Sense-making process

Sense-making can be seen as a process of creating meaning and preserving reciprocal exchanges between actors and their environments. Thus, it is a key instrument of institutionalisation that is sensitive to the cognitive intricacies that guide organisational behaviour as well as the operation of institutionalised practices at the micro-level (Austen and Kapias, 2016; Campbell, 1997; Jennings and Greenwood, 2003). In sense-making, action, dialogue, and discussion are treated as cycles rather than as linear sequences. The language of sense-making captures the realities of agency, flow, equivocality, transience, re-accomplishment, unfolding, and emergence, realities that are often obscured by the language of variables, nouns, quantities, and structures. Although action is not more significant than a discussion, it does tend to feature centrally in any understanding of sense-making (Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld, 2005).

Taylor and Van Every's (2000) observed that sense-making involves the cognitive process of turning circumstances into a situation that can be overtly expressed in words. Along similar lines, Pirolli and Card (1999) developed a cyclic and iterative process of sense-making of the world using information technology. The sense-making moves from raw data flow to a state where expertise can apply in two stages; a foraging loop and a sense-making loop. The foraging loop involves processes aimed at seeking, searching and filtering the information into a schema, and a sense-making loop that involves the iterative development of a mental model.

Two words often associated with sense-making are *ambiguity* and *equivocality*. To reduce ambiguity entails learning through action to distinguish better between what might have been going on and what is really going on; reducing equivocality suggests that action does not provide clarity. The clarification comes from shaping the matter you are attending to and in doing so, a clear picture emerges of what is going on (Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld, 2005; Colville et al., 2012). Both discovery and invention are part of the sense-making process. Discovery points towards the existence of something to be found once ambiguity is cleared. Ntuen (2009) conducted a study to understand how change agents use sense-making as a naturalistic knowledge discovery model and found that change agents use different strategies when making sense of information in uncertain and adaptively evolving situations. By employing these

different strategies and relating their current reality to previous experiences, they use different cognitive skills in knowledge discovery. However, sense-making is more focused on processes by which change agents generate what they interpret, shifting the focus to invention as opposed to discovery.

Below is a schematic presentation, exemplifying the integrated nature of sense-making and legitimacy in institutions. The role-players, that is, the various actors, the institution, and the external environment in which the institution operates, are indicated. The contextual forces that have to be considered by change agents are indicated by dotted arrows. The constant interaction between actors, institutions and the broader environment is indicated. The pressure to adopt similar behaviours and to imitate one another is also illustrated. Whether driven by mimetic, coercive, or normative pressures, institutions tend to adopt similar structures, norms, and practices. The funnel symbolises the legitimacy demands on universities. All these forces are constantly evolving and changing and actors join and leave the organisation. The different environmental forces are indicated with dotted arrows.

I have compiled this scheme based on the insights of work from DiMaggio and Powell (1991); Han (1994); Lieberman and Asaba, (2006); Schofer and Meyer (2005) and Ramirez and Christensen (2013).

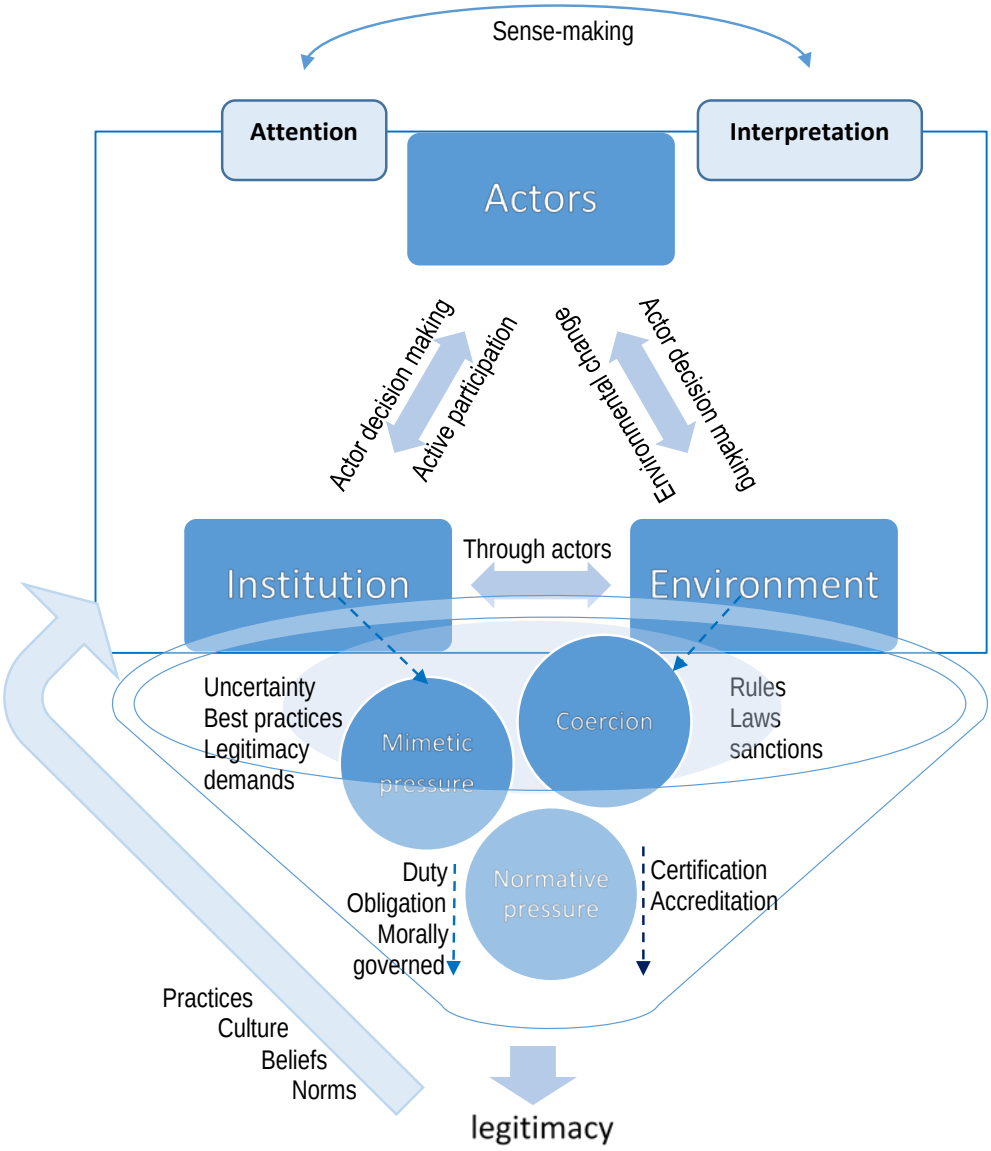


Figure 2-2 The forces involved in the institutional legitimation process

It is important to take cognizance of the fact that institutions provide actors not only with opportunities as well as restraints, but also a powerful resource in the form of a set of behavioural incentives and disincentives and the provision of normative and situational norms.

The discussion on sense-making cannot be concluded without referring to the process of sense-giving. This facilitation of sense-making is called sense-giving (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). Sense-giving is concerned with the process of attempting to influence the sense-making and

construction of meaning of other social actors towards a new negotiated organisational reality (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991. Sense-making is an individual and internal process, yet it is highly likely that social actors are influenced by one another in this process. Gioia and Chittipeddi (1991) described 'change' as a negotiation process where the change agents must provide new interpretations of the organisation to steer the outcome of the change. From the above, it is clear that the view of a senior manager, as a key driver of strategic change at an institution, has a significant impact on sense-making and sense-giving during and after events (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991).

2.4 Institutional analysis of universities

The term 'institution' is more than the combination of regulations, long-term social actions, organisations, and arrangements. In this sense, the institutional analysis should focus on describing and explaining the relationship between ideas and the structuring of social action by examining which guiding ideas structure social action and establish conditions for legitimacy. Furthermore, during institutional analysis, an understanding of the contemporary institutional environment is an important analytic key in understanding the behaviour of universities.

The alignment of higher education to societal needs is the concern of both institutions and individuals. According to Hall and Taylor (1996), it is also important to understand how institutions affect the behaviour of individuals. Immergut (2005) emphasises that institutions do not determine social action but provide a context in which action takes place. Meeting enrolment targets, reducing dropout rates, and producing graduates are key performance indicators of public universities (DHET, 2015b). However, I am of the view that delivering on these key performance indicators against agreed-upon targets has given universities a deceitful sense of assurance that they meet societal needs and therefore enjoy institutional legitimacy.

According to Cabal (1993), universities arose from agreement and consensus between teachers and students who were united for the corporate management of universal knowledge. Ruben, Immordino and Tromp (2009) assert that the business of higher education can be defined as the production, dissemination, translation and use of ideas, and the cultivation of education, scholarship, and students. However, this statement does not do justice in encapsulating the complex and unique characteristics that define public higher education institutions. A university is among other things, a social organisation, a public service, a medium of

standardised socialisation processes, a meritocratic selection mechanism, a system of role expectations and group formation and a place of science (Nohria and Ghoshal, 1997; Westney, 1993).

Universities must respond not only to pressing national needs but also explore new realities and opportunities (Rutherford and Rabovsky, 2014). Different stakeholders have increasing expectations from universities, ranging from the curriculum, teaching processes, research output, application and refinement of knowledge as catalysts for creating wealth, and contributing to socio-economic development (Jongbloed, 2010). Although public universities fall within the public domain as it is partially funded by taxpayers' money, it has a specific history of professional and institutional autonomy and the performance benchmarks of universities are multi-dimensional. Universities, with decentralised management structures and multiple stakeholders, lack the organisational coherence of a business enterprise (Lester, 1999; OECD, 2016). According to Lepsius (2017) the overarching focus on science symbolises methodological conventions in solving problems, finding solutions, prevailing as scientific. In this context, 'scientific', as a rationality criterion, has been converted into an acceptable practice for social action by academics and students resulting in normative imperatives, such as verifiability of data, avoidance of value judgments, disclosure of sources, and sharing of results. These imperatives underpin the conduct of faculty members. Welsh and Metcalf (2003) found that the perceived realities of academic and support staff differ. Whereas the academic prevailing definition of quality at a university is based on outcomes and not on resource inputs, administrators are more receptive to external aspirations for higher education, realising that the university revolves around a nucleus of external forces that greatly affect the institution's continued vitality. Academics tend to have more trust in the academic culture than in administration and they remain committed to their disciplines and educative mission.

Universities are expected to provide high-level teaching and specialised training and reinforce the economy's competitiveness and production of wealth. Universities are expected to foster collaboration between the university, industry, and business. The university should act as a sifting device, for, despite the big drive towards massification, they should select acceptable candidates based on intellectual capacities. This function of selection and degree-giving have been institutionalised over the years. Legitimacy affirms the belief that universities indeed fulfil this role and that serving the external world with quality, justice, efficacy, and pertinence

depends on the internal arrangements. Cobban (1991) cited examples of universities that failed because of an inability to develop a protective and cohesive organisation to sustain its intellectual advance.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter provided a detail overview of institutional theory and explained the importance of maintaining legitimacy as an institution. Radical change and the risks associated with radical change, especially in highly institutionalised organisations were described. The properties of sense-making as well as the sense-making process, used to better understand radical change, were outlined. Sense-making has been contextualised as a key instrument during institutionalisation and the process of creating meaning and preserving reciprocal exchanges between actors and their environments was described.

The next chapter provides the specific context of public universities in South Africa and the series of events that led to the fee crisis.

CHAPTER 3 THE CONTEXT OF PUBLIC UNIVERSITIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

To better understand the turmoil at South African universities, the development and historical context of the South African Higher Education landscape is expounded in this chapter. Being an institution, public universities in South Africa cannot be viewed without considering the broader environment in which they operate. This is particularly relevant in South Africa, a country still grappling with the legacy of apartheid and striving to create a transformed society. Contributing to the environmental complexity are the different ideological and political expectations, fuelled by societal, financial, and transformational competing pressures on universities in South Africa. Amidst national developments, global competition for research funding and ranking is also increasing.

As stated in Chapter 2, institutions are part of a macro-environment, henceforth to do justice to the discussion on public universities, this chapter commences with a synopsis of the South African societal culture. This is followed by a brief overview of the state of universities during apartheid. The bulk of the chapter contains a synopsis of the development of universities after the first democratic election and the subsequent introduction of a new funding framework in 2004. The implementation of the funding framework is unpacked to illustrate the impact of this public policy on universities. The final section of this chapter describes the institutionalised practices that were challenged during the fee protests.

3.1 South African societal culture

Societal culture is associated with a particular society and it is important in understanding how people interact and share common interests. Culture, and more specifically multiculturalism, is important for any study that deals with societal issues. Every social actor brings different values and beliefs, as experienced in their society, into an organisation and different cultural orientations lead to different interpretations of behaviour (Stone-Romero, Stone, and Salas, 2003). Societal cultures are learned early in life, held deeply, and change slowly with generations. The socio-cultural environment gives an idea of learned behavioural traits shared by the members of a society that include social, economic, and political condition (Akhtar et al., 2016; Berkes, 2009). The two major aspects of culture are (i) material and (ii) non-material cultures. Material culture is explicit and directly observable as the cultural products of any

society. The non-material aspects of culture consist of the cumulative knowledge, philosophy, spatial relations, and values transmitted in a society.

Organisations do not exist in a vacuum but a specific socio-cultural environment. The values of social actors affect their outlook and create specific behavioural patterns that are observed by others as the most appropriate in any given situation. These values are reflected over time in institutions (Du Plessis and De Bruin, 2015; Minkov, 2009). Even more so, the cultures of senior leaders contribute to the institutional culture over time. The more senior the position, the greater the sphere of potential influence. This is paramount in universities with not only a diversity of cultures and people from different disciplines but also generational differences between the largest cohort of students and senior staff.

In South Africa, a country with diverse cultures, eleven official languages and different political and social histories, culture plays an important role in social interaction. Contributing to the unique cultural societal context, is the history of the South (Rensburg, 1993). Multicultural societies are formed when people live and work and co-exist with the same boundaries. The separated development of different cultures led to fewer opportunities for social integration. The marginalisation of non-white South Africans has caused severe socio-economic problems. After the first democratic election, several steps were taken by the government to address social inequality and ensure a peaceful transition. Rapid new social and economic policies were implemented to facilitate a peaceful transition. At the same time, to uphold legitimacy, extensive promises of improvement were made by political leaders (Adelzadeh, 2003).

The Reconstruction and Development Program was launched in 1994. One of the objectives was the provision of at least one million houses within five years. However, after two years, only 1.5% of the envisaged number of houses were built and resources proved to be insufficient in meeting the basic needs of its occupants. In 1996 a Constitution was adopted that guaranteed citizens, amongst other things, the right to housing, health care services, food and water, social security, and basic education. Parallel to the Constitution, business-related strategies to encourage investment and redistribution of wealth were introduced. Efforts were made to increase employment opportunities, improve wages, and reduce the budget deficit; yet, poverty, unemployment, and inequality remain problem areas (Statistics South Africa, 2015). The success of many of these interventions is questionable in terms of its impact as well as long-

term sustainability and repeatedly revealed the insufficiency of the government's resources and capacities to achieve its haughty aims (Berger et al., 2014). One of the most important factors in the formation of multicultural societies is the migration between communities. The reason may be economic, social, or political (Dogan, 2017). When considering the multicultural context of South Africa, it is important to contemplate that the aforementioned socio-economic developments led to advanced transformations within the same cultures. Stereotyping should be avoided as cultures merge and change increasingly as societal integration takes place.

Turning to demographics, South Africa consists of four race groups White, Black, Indian (or Asian) and Coloured. At the time of the last census (Statistics South Africa, 2011), 79.4 percent declared themselves to be Black African while 9.2 percent were shown as White, 8.8 percent coloured and 2.6 percent Indian or Asian. Although these races have various ethnical groups with their languages and cultures, they meet and work together daily in organisations (Rensburg, 1993). The socio-political and historical norms and values of a society impact on organisations, as institutionalised practices are to a large extent based on the values and belief systems of the surrounding societies. Institutions are also not immune to influences from other parts of the world. Shortly before the first democratic election, Rensburg (1993) remarked that there exists a disjuncture between societal- and organisational cultures, but this has since grown in intensity due to political changes and other challenges such as unemployment, violence, and the influence of labour unions.

3.1.1 Cultural diversity

In the literature a number of research findings point towards different responses from diverse cultures in a particular situation and the environment under study. According to Seekings (2008) native Africans or Blacks are perceived to be more collectivist than Whites who are more individualistic in accordance with their European ancestry. This collectivist culture is evident in the notion of *Ubuntu*, a Nguni term that can be translated as *humanity*, or '*humanity towards others'*, expressing the belief that all humans are connected and valuing social relationships for their self-concept (Valchev et al., 2013). Ubuntu entrenches the core values of respect, caring, and solidarity, and it is characterised by a strong belief in reciprocity, connectedness, and interdependence. According to (Murithi, 2006), Ubuntu emphasises fair resource distribution for the benefit of all.

Multicultural societies can be viewed through different lenses, and different truths can be discovered, depending on which examples of history are considered. Many research findings point towards multicultural societies as providing unique competitive advantages, whilst other researchers argue that multiculturalism should not be romanticised or idealised. Bennet (2011) found that cultural diversity in South Africa often seeks to amplify the identity of ethnic groups and can lead to self-rule, resentment, and fragmentation. Through focusing for example on the contribution of a certain cultural leader, but masking social inequities at the same time, can create a false self-esteem and heighten cultural discrimination (Bennett, 2011). Power issues remain a constant challenge, as multiculturalism might be used to control or manage diversity. Some liberal political analysts perceive multiculturalism as a tool to withstand dominant interests under the guise of extending political and cultural suffrage to minority groups (Gunew, 2004).

Berger et al. (2014) explored the impact of context and culture on corporate responsibility expectations in South Africa. Results pointed towards economic and social development as the main spheres within which corporate responsibility is conceptualised with corporate sustainability on the periphery. Results also highlighted ties between respondents' expectations of the responsibilities of corporations, the historical context, and cultural dimensions prevalent in South Africa. Other findings highlighted differences in the way people from diverse cultures behave in the work environment. Differences with respect to the importance of punctuality, time orientation and the formation of personal relationships were found (Stone-Romero et al., 2003). In a study amongst a student community in South Africa, Valchev et al. (2013) applied two methods of behavioural measurement to different cultural groups to advance the understanding of personality and behaviour across cultures. The study concluded that more similarities than differences exist in behaviour predictability and consistency between Blacks and Whites in South Africa. Cultural differences may be more noticeable in socially constructed phenomena, such as beliefs and perceptions, than in the actual links between personality and behaviour.

Irrespective of cultural differences, the bigger question probably facing South Africa is the question raised by Milazi (2012) and that is whether South Africa is indeed multicultural or simply a nation with many cultures? I argue that South Africa is a young democracy that accommodates many different cultures, but true multiculturalism is still an elusive concept. The focus of institutional studies in the South African context should not only highlight cultural

differences but rather focus on promoting multiculturalism and identifying and eliminating factors that prevent the country from functioning as a truly multicultural society.

3.1.2 Labour market

High levels of unemployment remain the key challenge for South Africa and the government struggles to stimulate economic growth to generate sufficient jobs. The rate of unemployment stood at 25.1% of the workforce in 2015 and 27.7% in the third quarter of 2017 (Hurlbut, 2018). The labour market is characterised by several challenges. Due to insufficient economic stimulation, economic growth is predicted to increase slightly from 1.5% in 2019 to 2.1% in 2021, compared to a global economic growth-projection of 3.5% in 2019 and 3.6% in 2020. Poverty and inequality are both outflows of unemployment and remain the overriding concerns for South Africa's development policies and programs and the current National Development Plan (NPC, 2012).

The labour market is effectually split into two extreme job categories. At one end of the extreme, you will find a small number of people with highly paid jobs in mainly formal sectors and larger enterprises. On the other end, you will find the majority of the population, working for minimum wage or in informal jobs. The wages between the two extremes are highly unequal. People in highly paid jobs are unlikely to resign whereas people in lower-income groups are more fluid, more likely to employ new entrants and more likely to witness exits from employment.

The labour unions have become a powerful force operating in the South African industry. Labour union leaders have become masters of negotiation and are perceived as having more bargaining power than organisational and political leaders and even government. The influence of labour unions is evident in the increase in industry strikes and the many cross-cultural communication problems caused indirectly by labour unions in organisations. Disputes between organisations and unions often lead to protest actions, which have become increasingly violent. This violence manifests more and more in other societal institutions. Recent and ongoing political changes in South Africa brought about a more violent and turbulent society than ever before. Many people have to cope with this culture of violence, especially in poor communities. For many South Africans, the organisation they are employed at has become more than merely a workplace - it has come to be a shelter and a haven removed from a violent society. In these organisations, workers attain yet another sense of who they are and what they can achieve.

3.2 Higher education context

Public universities in South Africa are divided into three types: traditional universities, which offer theoretically-oriented university degrees; universities of technology, which offer vocational oriented diplomas and degrees; and comprehensive universities, which offer a combination of both types of qualifications. Table 3.1 provides a summary of public universities in South Africa as well as their location and footprint in terms of the number of campuses.

Traditional universities

Institution	Nickname	No of campuses	Province
University of Cape Town	UCT	2	Cape Town
University of the Free State	UFS	2	Free State
University of Fart Hare	UFH	2	Eastern Cape
University of KwaZulu-Natal	UKZN	4	Kwa-Zulu Natal
University of Limpopo	UL	2	Limpopo
North-West University	NWU	3	North-West
University of Pretoria	UP	2	Gauteng
Rhodes University	RU	1	Eastern Cape
Sefako Makgatho University	SMU	1	Gauteng
University of Stellenbosch	US	4	Western Cape
University of the Western Cape	UWC	1	Western Cape
University of the Witwatersrand	WITS	1	Gauteng
University of Zululand	UNIZULU	1	KwaZulu-Natal

Comprehensive universities

Institution	Nickname	No of campuses	Province
University of Johannesburg	UJ	2	Gauteng
Nelson Mandela University	NMU	2	Eastern Cape
University of South Africa	UNISA	Distance education, campuses and regional offices nationwide	
University of Venda	UNIVEN		Venda
Walter Sisulu University	WSU		Eastern Cape

Universities of Technology

Institution	Nickname	No of campuses	Province
Cape Peninsula University of Technology	CPUT	2	*Western Cape*
Central University of Technology	CUT	2	Free State
Durban University of Technology	DUT	1	KwaZulu-Natal
Mangosuthu University of Technology	MSU	1	KwaZulu-Natal
University of Mpumalanga	UMP	1	Mpumalanga
Sol Plaatje University	SPU	1	Northern Cape
Tshwane University of Technology	TUT	5	Gauteng
Vaal University of Technology	VUT	4	Gauteng

Table 3-1 Public universities in South Africa

The merger process that led to the establishment of these universities will be elucidated later in the chapter under section 3.2.2.3. The overarching aim of the merger process was to create new institutions with new institutional cultures.

South Africa has a population of 55 653 654, with a gender distribution of male to female of 49% and 51% respectively. Gauteng province remains the most populous province with Northern Cape the least populated province. Looking at the distribution of public universities, it is not surprising that seven of the universities are situated in the Gauteng Province.

The next section traces the key developments in higher education over time and also illustrates the build-up of the current funding crisis.

3.2.1 Pre 1993 - higher education under apartheid

A survey of the literature for earlier scholarly articles on higher education in South Africa has revealed that the bulk of literature focuses on growth and achievement of universities. This literature can be classified as celebratory or marketing material and includes facts, numerical performance indicators, and growth statistics. The development of a university is often captured by an alumnus or ex-vice-chancellor in the form of a biography (Strydom, 2016). Strydom (2016) also found that former "non-white' universities, which are today referred to as historically disadvantaged universities, have a shortage of written histories. The biographies and celebratory publications highlighted the conflicted relationship with the past and the controversies faced by institutions to maintain legitimacy in the political climate (Behr, 1984; Boucher, 1974; Lefa, 2014). Under apartheid, policy and legislative documents promoted the development of universities for the different race groups (Saunders, 2000; Strydom, 2016). In South Africa, most of the senior civil servants, including the Directorate for Education, were political appointees, so educational decisions were heavily influenced by politics (Behr, 1984). What cannot be denied when reviewing these materials, is that the segregated past has been embedded in institutions.

Universities are not institutions that arose with all the necessary resources, infrastructure, and staff in place, but emerged over time and their current functioning is deeply rooted in local politics and economics. Whilst the funding formula, used at the time, recognised the public and private benefit of higher education, it failed to consider societal realities. It did not take into account that all students would not be in a position to carry the full costs of higher education. All higher education institutions were treated on equal terms, ignoring the prevailing inequality that existed in terms of infrastructure and fund-raising capabilities. As the formula was not

designed to consider disparate groups of institutions of higher learning, it produced an inequitable system. Finally, the income and expenditure data generated by these institutions were very different from the data on which the formula was statistically based (CHE, 2004).

In 1994, the South African higher education sector hosted 360 250 students with a racial composition of 46.7%, 5.1%, 6.9% and 41.4% for African. Coloured, Indian, and White students respectively. The main hindrance facing the progression of African learners into higher education in the early nineties was – and is still prevailing - the poor quality of basic education, particularly in scarce skills areas, such as Mathematics, Science, and Accounting.

3.2.2 Post-1994 South African higher education landscape

The first democratic election in South Africa took place in 1994. I begin this section by offering an overview of the developments in the higher education sector since this election. The second part of the chapter contains more detail on the funding of higher education and highlights how an increase in tuition and a decrease in subsidy led to the funding crisis.

Unequal access and study opportunities for students and staff along lines of race, gender, class, and geography; racial division in the participation rate of students, and a lack of coordination and systemic planning characterised the higher education system in 1994 after the first democratic election. The five years following the election was dominated by major national debates around the establishment of a higher education landscape that ought to contribute to an equitable, economically developed, democratic South Africa (Lefa, 2014). The debates centred around four themes, redress of historical inequities, the establishment of a single coordinated system, expanded access, and governance. Firstly, principles were laid down for the new higher education landscape, including equity of resource provision and opportunities; a participatory democratic governance structure; balanced development of material and human resources; high standards of quality; academic freedom; institutional autonomy; and increased efficiency and productivity (Lefa, 2014).

Secondly, the idea of a single coordinated system of higher education was put forward, whilst balancing the demands for flexibility in terms of programme offerings and giving careful consideration to regional needs and acknowledging that some universities are more research-intensive than others. Within this single coordinated system, it was advocated that planning,

governance and funding arrangements would reflect and support institutional differentiation. As will be indicated under the discussion of the framework, this differentiation was not sufficiently recognised and led to isomorphism and the loss of institutional autonomy (Bunting, 2006; Lefa, 2014). Thirdly, the need for expanded access within the limits of public funding was highlighted. These themes were subsequently put in practice through the implementation of a new funding framework that will be discussed in section 3.3.1. In the fourth place, recommendations around governance were explored. At first, a national structure with two bodies was proposed – a Higher Education Forum and a Higher Education Council. The council would have a policy development role and was to have more power than the forum. To avoid a possible power struggle, a single body, called the Council on Higher Education (CHE) was established, that consisted of both stakeholders and higher education specialists. The main function of the CHE was that of quality assurance and control through the establishment of the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC) as stipulated by the South Africa Qualifications Act (SAQA), No. 58 of 1995.

Public policies, used as steering mechanisms, articulate a set of decisions with common long-term objectives for influencing or solving societal problems and as such are value-laden and often underpinned by ideological contestations. These policies have the power to not only enforce new rules but also entrench ideological changes (Allan, 2010). The same applies to the higher education landscape. The Higher Education Act (1997) and the White Paper on Education (DoE, 1997) were subsequently gazetted to set out the vision and goals for the transformation of the post-school sector.

> "*… to redress past inequalities and to transform the higher education system to serve a new social order, to meet pressing national needs, and to respond to new realities and opportunities*" (DoE, 1997).

The White Paper, however, did not include any particular mechanisms or recommendations for going beyond financial and educational deficiencies left by the legacy of apartheid (Bunting, 2006). Another deficiency of the White Paper was the lack of clarity about how the transformation was to take place (Lefa, 2014). The White Paper led to the development and implementation of a series of higher education policies to steer the transformation of higher education.

3.2.2.1 National student financial aid (NSFAS) – 1999

To support the National plan for higher education, a student financial aid bursary and loan scheme, referred to as NSFAS, was introduced in 1999, funded by government for those who do not have the financial means to fund their studies and in most cases cannot access bank funding, study loans or bursaries. While a proportion of students could source funding from their families, private bursaries or commercial loans, the enrolment growth has led to an increasing proportion of students being unable to access such sources, forcing them to rely mostly on NSFAS. The available funding for student financial aid has fallen short of the number of qualified applicants. Furthermore, the funding made available to students was not in all cases enough to cover the cost of tuition, accommodation, books, and meals. In 2011 and 2013, NSFAS awards were made to 31% and 24% of all undergraduate university students, respectively. The reality was that many students qualified, but could not be funded due to limited funding. In 2017, more than 50 000 students applied and qualified, but could not be funded by NSFAS. This reliance on NSFAS has severe implications for the approach to the distribution of state funds.

3.2.2.2 National plan for higher education - 2001

The overarching goals of the (NPHE) National Plan for Higher Education (Ministry of Education, 2001) were to increase the graduates needed for social and economic development, sustain, and promote research, achieve equity and diversity and to restructure the institutional landscape. Increasing the number of graduates would be accomplished through better alignment of the labour market and student enrolments; and through increased participation by broadening the social base of students. The restructuring was given effect through a merger process.

3.2.2.3 Restructuring of the higher education landscape through mergers - 2003

Following an extensive restructuring of the higher education landscape in 2003 through the merging of institutions, the number of public universities were reduced from 36 to 23. Three new universities have been created since, taking the number to 26. Although a single coordinated system has contributed to unifying a fragmented system, it has not promoted institutional differentiation and all institutions are funded according to the same key drivers (i) teaching input, measures by the number of enrolled students; (ii) teaching output, measured by the number of graduates, (iii) research measured by the number of honours, masters and doctoral

graduates as well as accredited publications; and (iv) institutional factors based on the institutional size and proportion of historically-disadvantaged students. This has led to mission drift as almost all poor performing research universities increased efforts to build research capacity. To the detriment of students, work experience has become an added recommendation, but not a minimum requirement for teaching at a University of Technology. The pressure on staff members to increase qualifications in their disciplines has hampered initiatives to introduce teaching qualifications for academics.

3.2.2.4 Split of education portfolio - 2009

In May 2009, the education portfolio was split into a Ministry for Basic education and a Ministry for Higher Education and Training. The Department of Science and Technology also became a separate department. The reasons for the split included the need for a relationship between further education and training colleges and universities to be driven centrally, and the old department was far too large, resulting in implementation problems (Fransman, 2009; Lewis, 2010). Subsequently, the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2013) was developed by the new ministry to represent the government's thinking in the area of higher education and training. As part of the reshuffling of the cabinet after the 2019 election, the Department of Higher Education and Training and The Department of Science and Technology were combined into one ministry.

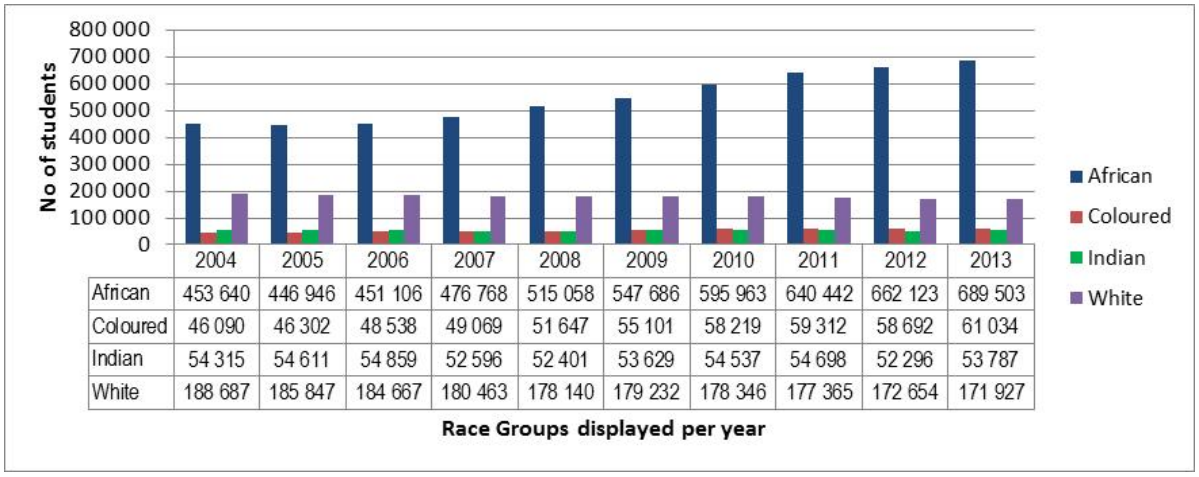
3.2.2.5 White Paper for Post-School Education and Training - 2013

Ambitious objectives are listed in the White Paper, including (i) the expansion of programmes in areas required for national growth; (ii) grants for two new universities; (iii) support for professional development and recognition of academic staff; (iv) an increase in student housing and improved student housing norms; (v) an increase in research capacity; (vi) expanding student access and success; and (vii) to progressively support access for students of varying financial means (DHET, 2013).

These objectives are not prioritised; neither does the White Paper allude to any financial requirements for the effective implementation thereof. At the same time, an unrealistic growth target of 1.6 million learners by 2030 is proposed and a differentiated higher education landscape is envisaged, without a clear methodology on how to affect these targets. Buchanan and Huczynski (1997) state that a university cannot be viewed as an organisation with a fixed

set of characteristics, but rather as a set of permanent tensions managed according to the context prevalent at a given time. Policymakers perceive universities as places where general powers of the mind are developed and specialised training is offered. However, these very same policymakers are advocates of increased access and increased higher education participation rates, commonly referred to as massification (Buchanan and Huczynski, 1997). Due to limited resources and financial constraints, this twofold notion of specialisation and massification causes tension. Nevertheless, the National plan for higher education guilelessly conceptualises massification as increased access and growth at all higher education institutions, whilst completely undervaluing differentiation and training specialisation in the process. Jansen (2000) has rightly cautioned the government that the development of policies to appease a political mandate without thoroughly assessing long-term effectiveness could become a major stumbling block in sustaining higher education.

To put the objectives of the White Paper into perspective, a summary of higher education enrolments is provided in figure 3.1, followed by a graphical representation of the higher education participation rate of the different population groups for the period 2004-2013 in figure 3.2. The enrolment trend shows a 32% increase in enrolments over the period, with the highest increase in African students (52%) and negative growth in White and Indian students of 9% and 1% respectively.

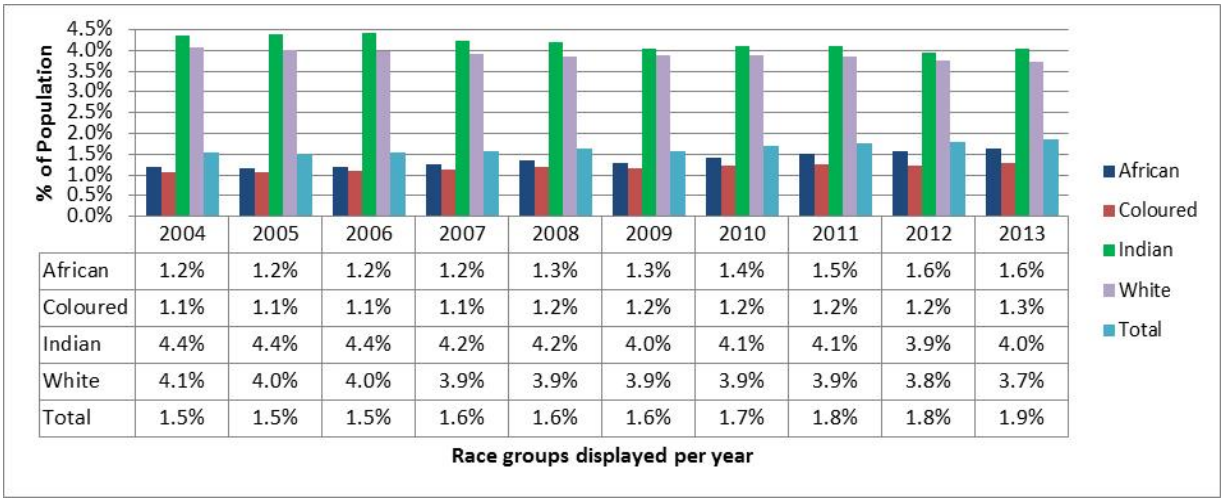


	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
African	453 640	446 946	451 106	476 768	515 058	547 686	595 963	640 442	662 123	689 503
Coloured	46 090	46 302	48 538	49 069	51 647	55 101	58 219	59 312	58 692	61 034
Indian	54 315	54 611	54 859	52 596	52 401	53 629	54 537	54 698	52 296	53 787
White	188 687	185 847	184 667	180 463	178 140	179 232	178 346	177 365	172 654	171 927

Figure 3-1 Public higher education enrolments from 2004-2013

Although the enrolments in African and Coloured students increased significantly, the proportional participation of African students as a percentage of the population of 42 284 132

increased with 0.4% and that of Coloured students with 0.2% of the population of 4 766 172. At the same time, the proportional presentation of White students (from a population of 1 329 302) and Indian students (from a population of 4 602 386) both dropped with 0.4%. Access to higher education goes beyond the ability to access funding; it also speaks to access through differential fees and access requirements, race, and class representation, access to the resources and the matching of equity of access with equity of success.



	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
African	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%	1.3%	1.4%	1.5%	1.6%	1.6%
Coloured	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.1%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%
Indian	4.4%	4.4%	4.4%	4.2%	4.2%	4.0%	4.1%	4.1%	3.9%	4.0%
White	4.1%	4.0%	4.0%	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%	3.9%	3.8%	3.7%
Total	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	1.6%	1.6%	1.6%	1.7%	1.8%	1.8%	1.9%

Figure 3-2 Population representation of higher education enrolments from 2004-2013, source: CHE (2016a), DHET (2015b)

The racial contours of inequality have been softened to some extent. Yet, the ambitious growth targets set for higher education participation, without the provision of sufficient funding to maintain a constant contribution ratio to higher education, have perpetuated social inequality in South Africa. This graph highlights the dependence of higher education goals and funding on the broader socio-economic strategy of the country and the need for an impartial funding model and a non-discriminatory payment system. The increase in student numbers not only led to pressure on public funds and increases in tuition fees but also an increase in the demand for student housing. The second challenge is that the increase in enrolments is not echoed in the output (graduates). The low throughput and high dropout rate as reflected in Table 3.2, depicts severe system inefficiencies that contribute to the funding crisis.

A further problem that arose due to the increase in student numbers is a shortage of student housing. A lack of safe and reliable public transport as well as the realisation that many students come from poor socio-economic households; are two key driving forces for providing student housing. A Ministerial Committee that reviewed the provision of student housing in 2011, found

that only 5.3% of new first-year contact students were accommodated in university residences. An estimated annual cost of approximately R5 billion per year for the next fifteen years is required to address the backlog in student housing (Cloete et al., 2011). The most vulnerable group of students are first time entering students. In an attempt to provide a holistic student experience, all public institutions were mandated to develop strategies for increasing the percentage of residence places for first-year students to reach a threshold of 30% within ten years (DHET, 2015a). No subsidy for the operational expenses of student housing is provided by the government and only in certain instances, like for historically disadvantaged institutions, capital contributions are made to build new accommodation. With the pressing need for student housing as well as affordable tuition and steep enrolment targets, it is unlikely that the aforementioned targets will be achieved with public funding. Henceforth, opportunities for private accommodation to fill the gap on student housing have increased dramatically, also opening the door for possible public-private partnerships.

3.2.2.6 System inefficiencies

Table 3.2 summarises the performance of the 2006 cohort of contact students that graduated in minimum time, and also the proportion that dropped out at the end of this period, for each qualification type. Only 27% of the students completed their qualification in the minimum prescribed time. Substantial racial disparities are evident. Very small proportions of African, Coloured, and Indian students graduated in regulation time, whilst the throughput rate of White students (44%) is above the national average. By the end of the regulation time, 40% of the students have dropped out of the system. These students are more likely to be NSFAS students and dropping out of the system further contributes to poor cost recovery. The lack of an expanded post-school system exacerbates the problem since university education is perceived as the only post-school option and poor articulation exists between the technical vocational education and training colleges and universities.

	Graduation in minimum Time (%)					**Attrition by end of minimum Time (%)**				
	African	Coloured	Indian	White	All	African	Coloured	Indian	White	All
3-year degrees	20	20	26	43	29	39	50	37	31	37
4-year degrees	30	28	31	47	36	41	47	43	33	39
3-year diplomas	16	27	27	38	20	45	45	39	38	44
All qualifications	**20**	**24**	**28**	**44**	**27**	**42**	**47**	**39**	**33**	**40**

Table 3-2 Graduation and attrition rate in minimum time per race group (%), source: CHE (2013)

3.3 Implementation of the higher education funding framework

To further give effect to the White Paper, a new funding framework has been implemented in 2005, executed through the publication of annual ministerial statements. Funding is considered a core steering mechanism for higher education. To better understand the build-up to the funding crisis, the next few paragraphs provide a critical reflection of the gradual impact of the implementation of the funding framework on institutions.

3.3.1 Underpinning principles

There is consensus that higher education is both a public and private good and numerous studies have confirmed the necessity for private and public funding; yet there are divergent views on the distribution of funding sources (Browne, 2010; McMahon, 2009). Browne (2010) argues that the private benefits of higher education exceed the public benefit, justifying the contribution of students to finance their studies. In contrast to Browne, McMahon (2009) maintains that the long-term direct and indirect benefits to society exceed private benefits. Flowing from these arguments, funding of public institutions can be classified into three categories: the dominance of the state, the dominance of student contributions and a combination of diversified sources. Irrespective of the dominant model, the funding support options for students remain the biggest barrier or enabler for access, not only for covering tuition fees but also for covering the cost of living.

The economic principles that underpin the public funding policy focus on two main factors: (i) resource allocation and (ii) subsidisation (Barr, 2004; Jongbloed, 2010). Resource allocation refers to the factors that influence the decision on how the available public resources are distributed between institutions. Linked to this is the extent to which the higher education system should be driven by resource allocation or whether student demand and student choice should be the priority (HEFCE, 2013).

Incremental budgeting was used in South Africa before the introduction of the 2004 funding framework. Its biggest criticism was the fact that it perpetuated the existing trends in the institutions with little focus on whether the costs were linked to core activities. This funding model is referred to in the literature as incremental budgeting or negotiation funding. It is a centralised approach where the previous year's budget allocation becomes the basis for the next

year's allocation (Jongbloed, 2010). The result of starting from a baseline can reduce unpredictability and contribute towards stability for institutions, but the disadvantage is that budgetary misallocations and ineffective spending can be perpetuated in the system. It was not regarded as a suitable steering mechanism to advance the objectives set out in the White Paper (Ministry of Education, 2004).

The second factor, subsidisation, is underpinned by the assumption that higher education creates a private as well as a public benefit; consequently, the cost should be divided between the state, using money from the taxpayers, and students, in the form of tuition fees. Higher education expenditure can be calculated as the total amount of money or funds allocated from public and private sector budgets for higher education (OECD, 2015). Jongbloed (2010) argues that higher education funding is much more than just a funding allocation mechanism, it is also a powerful steering instrument, since it is used by government to implement common goals (e.g., better throughput rates, increased access); it incentivises good teaching and research performance and attempts to increase efficiency and maximise output with limited resources. However, a critical analysis of World Bank international indicators has revealed that public expenditure per student bears a negative association with tertiary enrolment ratios (Yang and McCall, 2014). As a result, private resources become more and more important in a massified higher education system.

Friedman (2005) concluded that economic development drives university access. Economic activities highlight the value of higher education and its role in improving the quality of life. Access to higher education is perceived by many people as the gateway from poverty to employment.

3.3.2 Higher education funding model

Like any behavioural regulation, an institutionalised principle also requires sanctioning power that enforces and defends its claim to validity. The nature and extent of sanctions are crucial for institutionalisation processes. The government's introduction of the funding framework in 2004 acted as a strong sanctioning tool for higher education (Ministry of Education, 2004). Whereas the old funding formula was based on incremental and political budgeting, the new funding framework relies heavily on a combination of formula and performance-based funding. The funding process is initiated by the government, establishing how much money is available to spend on higher education, and then distributing the funds to universities based on three-year

enrolment plans and set targets. The new funding mechanism operates in a top-down manner and only once the government has determined the actual budget for a given year, the different mechanisms and formulas within the funding framework come into operation (Ministry of Education, 2004).

According to Khinda (2014), formula funding is an attempt to level the playing field and enhance transparency with well-defined rules and measurements. Advantages of performance-based funding include an awareness of institutional performance, clear benchmarks, institutional comparison, transparency, and accountability of different units within the institution as well as improved alignment of state and institutional priorities. The biggest advantage is that a set of common measurements can be useful when comparing institutions. However, when institutions are funded through a single formula, the foci tend to shift from quality to quantity and institutional differentiation is discouraged. Potential risks include a narrow view of university performance, quality reduction, lack of support in academia and the tendency to prioritise only performance that can be measured and neglect others (Cavanaugh and Garland, 2012; Harnisch, 2011; HEFCE, 2013; Rutherford and Rabovsky, 2014). Rutherford and Rabovsky (2014) further argued that performance funding can only be effective when the performance incentives are big enough to change behaviour. When comparing higher education to a production process that distinguishes between input, throughput, and output, then performance-based funding also has the potential to focus the funding on all processes in the system, making it a very powerful steering mechanism. The focus on *output*, as opposed to only *input*, is the biggest difference between incremental and performance budgeting. When income is not simply a function of the number of students multiplied by the number of years of study, institutions have an interest in developing more efficient means of delivery.

A downside of the framework is that formula funding does not necessarily suggest more money for institutions; it is merely a cost allocation driver as the value of the unit cost can differ from one budget cycle to the next. Barr (2004) describes formula funding as a cumbersome and multifaceted process with price and quantity control as the two outcomes, but the inclusion of performance measurements in the formula has alleviated some of the criticism against traditional formula funding that largely focused on input.

Initially, the new funding framework held many promises. However, the realities of the implementation became increasingly problematic and had a profound impact on institutional autonomy and doubt exists as to whether it succeeded in addressing inequality in the system. These implementation realities are unpacked in the next section.

3.3.3 Evolution of the funding framework

The new funding framework was phased in from 2004 to 2007 and fully implemented from 2008 onwards. The phased-in approach was followed to ensure that the higher education system would not be destabilised. The framework includes information related to available funding, forecasts of expected student input and output totals plus the weighting thereof as well as details of other grants. The framework makes provision for block grants as well as earmarked grants. Block grants are undesignated grants that may be spent at the discretion of the council of each institution, whilst earmarked grants are funds that may only be used for specific purposes designated by the Minister (Ministry of Education, 2004). The increase in tuition fees reached a tipping point when students across the country started protesting about the rise in tuition fees for 2016. The government announced a zero percent increase in 2015. Since tuition fees in South Africa are determined by individual institutions, serious concerns were raised about the infringement on institutional autonomy when politicians, and not university councils, started making announcements on tuition fees in 2015. The government decision also impacted differently on the different institutions, since the existing fee structures, as well as proposed budget increments, differed from institution to institution. Varying levels of outstanding and historic student debt existed at the different institutions. The no-fee increment announcement was followed by the appointment of a fee commission, managed by a panel of judges, and not academics that have a vested interest in the crisis. The commission was tasked to investigate the feasibility of making higher education fee-free in South Africa. The commission followed a consultative approach, considering proposals from all stakeholders. Amongst the recommendations made by the commission was the finding that free higher education is not sustainable and a strong motivation for the introduction of income-contingent loans was put forward (Heher, Ally and Khumalo, 2017).

The following year was again marked by violent student protests for free higher education. Jasanoff (1990) defines government as a place where knowledge is disputed and often negotiated and a place where technical-scientific reality must accommodate political reality.

Enserink et al. (2013) add that government is not necessarily a unitary body that agrees on solutions for problems, but rather, loosely coupled departments with different interests and conflicting views to justify government interventions. This statement has proven to be very true when the President first announced a zero percent increase in 2015 and announced free higher education for the poor (households earning below R350 000 per annum) in December 2017. This was announced despite the warning of vice-chancellors that it would put the financial sustainability of public higher education institutions at risk. This free education includes tuition, accommodation, transport, books, and meals. Not only is this announcement contradictory to what the aforementioned fee committee recommended, it was also done without consulting Treasury, the parliamentary budget committee or university vice-chancellors. The autonomy of universities to determine their tuition fees lost legitimacy through the interference of government. This is an example where the sanctioning power of environmental institutionalism severely impacted the sanctioning power of organisations in that environment.

3.3.4 Impact of the funding framework on institutions

A great deal has been published about the impact of higher education funding on performance in terms of enrolments, graduates and research productivity, but less attention has been paid to the impact of the funding framework on the configuration and conceptualisation of universities as institutions (Jansen, 2017a; Odiambo and Ntenga, 2013). As institutions of society, universities do not exist for themselves. The action of institutions of higher education should be seen as part of a broader strategy. External forces have a tremendous impact on the life of universities. It is impossible, for example, to study the financial situation of universities in developing countries without analysing the consequences they suffer from debt and structural adjustment policies. Universities are not isolated from societies; in fact, many of their problems are a reflection of the changing world where the university student population is a microcosm of society (Cabal, 1993). Whilst pursuing their mission of training young people to respond to the needs of society, universities also have to take into account the rapid development of knowledge and skills. To do so requires continuous reflection on structures and programs and the ability to adapt to new needs. The links between society and the university are strong.

The three pillars that anchor universities' core business are (i) teaching and learning; (ii) research and (iii) community engagement. A significant portion of the funding policy is based on an analysis of each university's student intake; output performance; and research productivity

in the context of approved national benchmarks. It is important to note that although community engagement is defined as a pillar, no clear performance indicators or direct funding are allocated to this pillar in the funding framework (DHET, 2009). Pillay (2011) regards service to the community as the most critical contributing factor in fostering innovation and development in a low-income country.

The year 2015 was a watershed year when the president announced that there would be no fee increase for 2016 and thereby intervening in the decision-making power of university councils. Adding to this, the Ministerial statement released at the end of 2017, announced that the shortfall generated by this announcement would be added to the block grant and would not be the same as the shortfall based on the student fee income per university. The consequence was that universities with lower fees received more funding and universities with higher fees received less income when the money was distributed as part of the block grant. Tacitly, this announcement signified the introduction of state-controlled fees.

3.3.4.1 Autonomy

Universities in South Africa used to enjoy a high level of institutional autonomy. The construction of identity and in particular the strengthening of autonomy has been a principal motto of most universities, including those in South Africa. Although public universities in South Africa fall within the public domain as it is partially funded by taxpayers' money, it has a specific history of professional and institutional autonomy and the performance benchmarks of universities are multi-dimensional. Institutional autonomy, according to Jansen (2017b), refers to the right of institutions to make decisions on core academic concerns for themselves; and academic freedom is the absence of external interference in seeking these concerns. Estermann (2017) adds that institutional autonomy has four dimensions: financial, staffing, academic and organisational. There are some indicators pointing towards the funding framework infringing on the institutional autonomy of public universities. The next section will illustrate how state interference has gradually eroded the autonomy of universities in South Africa.

Organisational autonomy refers to a university’s ability to decide freely on its internal organisation, academic structures, and decision-making processes. Institutional autonomy, institutional specialisation and differentiation are highlighted as key enablers for fostering universities as innovative organisations (KPMG, 2016; Schein, 2010). Block allocations and

earmarked grants are the two mechanisms used to allocate funds. Since the introduction of the funding framework, a gradual shift in the allocation of funds from block grants to earmarked grants has been taking place. Funds are increasingly allocated in the form of earmarked grants and has increased from eight percent of the total allocation in 2005, to 32 percent in 2016. The statements released for the period 2006 to 2008 indicate that universities would have to submit initial applications, where after universities would receive, without having to submit further applications, the eligible teaching development allocations for the next three years (DoE, 2015). However, over time, the spending provisions, as well as the reporting requirements, have become increasingly stringent.

The 2004 funding framework refers to the importance of both national and institutional planning, whilst the 2016 Ministerial statement has omitted institutional planning and only recognises the framework as a tool used by the government to steer the university sector (DHET, 2015b). What became apparent during the analysis of the annual Ministerial statements is that the intention or the stated purpose of earmarked grants has changed over time. In 2005 the multi-campus grants were introduced to cover the costs associated with the delivery of teaching, administrative and support services on more than one official campus. In 2015 these grants were phased out, stating that the multi-campus grant has served its purpose to make up for the loss of income (DHET, 2017). This is a contradiction since the multi-campus factor was never introduced to subside income-loss and universities still have to cover the administrative and support costs associated with multi-campus universities. Research conducted by Scott, Grebennikov and Johnston (2007) found that multi-campus universities are disadvantaged by funding constraints, confirming the view that multi-campus universities inevitably have to incur additional costs in ensuring equity of provision at all sites.

The last ten years have also seen a significant change in the types of earmarked grants being introduced. New earmarked grants include: infrastructure and efficiency grants, clinical training grants, a grant for veterinary sciences, grants for establishing new universities, the historically disadvantaged institutional development grant, the sector monitoring and evaluation grant, the new generation of academics grant as well as the university capacity development grant. Concurrent with the phasing out of the multi-campus grant, an HDI (historically disadvantaged institution) development grant was introduced (DHET, 2015a). The introduction of these grants portrays a very definite notion about universities as non-performing organisations that need

interventions to accelerate transformation. Monitoring reports are increasingly being used as a monitoring tool and are required as part of compliance. An annual public report entitled "University performance within the block grant", has been published in 2014 by the Department to present statistics on performance improvements of universities within each of the earmarked grants since its inception. This report is also an attempt to monitor the effectiveness of allocation formulas and normative targets to steer the university sector. The biggest criticism against this report is the fact that teaching and research are treated as quantifiable products and the integrated and interactive nature of teaching, research, innovation, and community involvement, as well as integrated approaches to student and staff capacity development, are disregarded.

Staffing autonomy refers to a university's ability to recruit, determine salaries and manage its human resources without external prescriptions or interference and under the university's long-term planning. Institutional differentiation can, for example, mean that one university can strategically plan to become research-intensive, whilst another university might emphasise undergraduate teaching. Related to staffing is the academic agenda where autonomy would refer to an institution's independence in managing academic affairs related to admission, curricula, size and shape of enrolments, quality assurance and the language of instruction. The 2015 Ministerial statement introduced the framework for the staffing of universities in South Africa. With the introduction of yet another earmarked grant, the University Capacity Development Grant, important powers regarding staffing and academic autonomy have been taken away from universities. This earmarked grant is envisaged to become the vehicle through which the next generation of academics will be appointed and the Department now has the power to confirm or reject the appointment of an academic staff member. Ministerial involvement in academic appointments is in direct contrast to institutional autonomy. Another emerging trend is that earmarked grants are introduced for a specific purpose and then used as a steering mechanism for something else. In the discipline of Veterinary Sciences, earmarked grants are also used as incentives for universities to change the equity profiles of their staff and students (DHET, 2015b).

Financial autonomy empowers universities to allocate budgets and manage funds independently and decide freely on internal financial affairs to achieve its strategic objectives (Estermann, 2017). Financial affairs refer to the ability to acquire assets and borrow money, own buildings, and determine tuition fees. In the 2004 funding framework it is stated that the Ministry takes no

account of income raised from student fees and other private sources when distributing government grants to individual institutions (DoE, 2015). This notion changed significantly with the increasing funding pressure and decline in subsidy per student over the past decade. In 2016, for the first time since the introduction of the funding framework, the Ministry formally appealed to universities, to put in place efficiency measures that would generate extra funding for universities. These measures could include the reduction of overheads; collaboration amongst universities, improved debt collection and attempts to increase donor funding and third-stream income. Figure 3.3 provides a schematic summary of references that are made to other sources of income in the ministerial statements, clearly illustrating the government's increasing concern with funding.

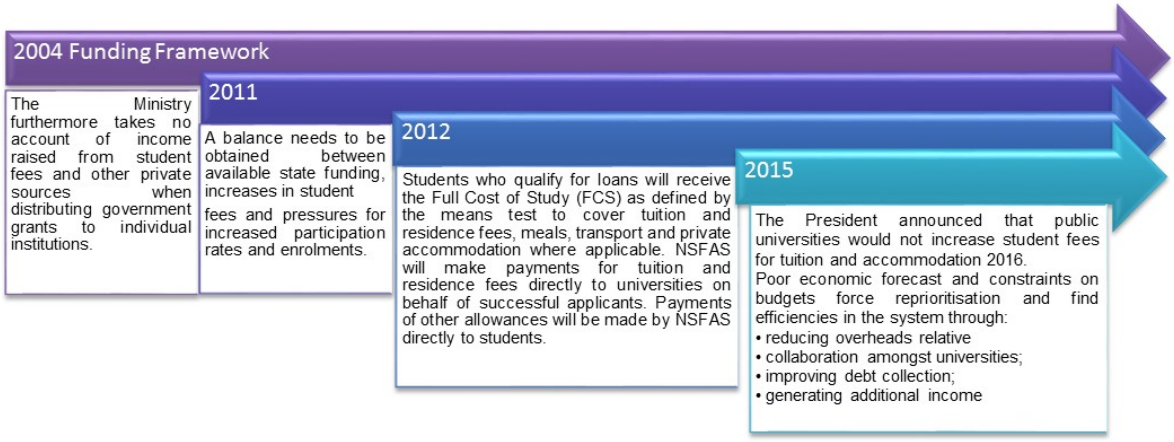


Figure 3-3 Schematic summary of statements about other sources of income, source: DoE (2004a), DHET (2010), DHET, (2012), DHET (2015b)

This should be seen against the background of the distribution of different sources of income for public universities, which was 50%, 25%, 25% for the subsidy, tuition and other sources in 2004. In 2015 this ratio has changed to 39%, 35%, and 26% respectively. Furthermore, the process for the allocation of NSFAS funding has been changed by excluding universities as part of the application process; introducing a system where funding follows the student. This new process necessitates a change in basic assumptions in the university's conceptualisation of its niche markets and value proposition (DHET, 2017).

Autonomy is not a goal to be pursued, but a crucial enabler for universities to strategically position themselves and to remain agile in a competitive environment (Estermann, 2017). The analysis of the ministerial statements reveals a growing tendency to undermine institutional autonomy in all four dimensions – organisational, staffing, financial and academic.

3.3.4.2 Increase in bureaucracy

The natural tendency during a quantitative evaluation is to increase the amount of information gathered. As a result, more monitoring leads to more managers, inevitably resulting in bureaucracy (Tahit, 2010). This is an accurate description of what has happened with the implementation of the funding policy. I will illustrate this tendency by referring to the following examples from the policy discourse: The introduction of an earmarked grant for monitoring and evaluation and the change in normative standards for research.

An earmarked grant for sector monitoring and evaluation has been introduced in 2015 (DHET, 2015a). This grant is used to create capacity in the Department of Higher Education to oversee the utilisation, reporting, and auditing of all earmarked grants; to plan for new projects and innovation in higher education and also to evaluate the annual performance plans of universities.

Furthermore, the allocation, administration, regulating and reporting of earmarked funds have become a specialised field in its own right; to such an extent that the administrative responsibilities and stipulations associated with each earmarked category cannot be included in the annual Ministerial Funding Statement anymore, but require separate detailed statements. As a result of these stringent audit and reporting requirements, many universities have centralised these funds and compiled procedures for the use thereof. Tedious reporting is now determining administrative processes, instead of the optimisation of business processes that should drive the implementation of administrative support. Besides the increase in administration and bureaucracy, a further downside is that many of the detail guidelines and regulations are not in place at the time that earmarked funds are introduced (DHET, 2017). The administration is exacerbated by the fact that earmarked grants are managed per financial year whilst the budgets of universities are managed per academic year. The late release of statements coupled with the lack of timeous guidelines does not do justice to universities as complex organisations. If not carefully managed, the increase in bureaucracy and reporting can stifle, instead of promote, innovative practices in higher education.

The Research Development Grant was introduced in 2004 as a residual determined by the number of actual publications produced, as well as the DHET budget allocation to the higher education sector. Universities that did not meet their normative targets were then given a

development grant (DoE, 2004). In addition, the funding framework also states that resources should be concentrated in universities with demonstrated capacity and potential for research. Many universities showed a significant increase in research productivity. However, instead of being incentivised by increasing the block grant and reducing regulatory reporting for research, the norms for research output units per staff member have been increased in such a manner that each university reflects a shortfall, and would therefore still receive research development funds (DHET, 2012). Instead of promoting differentiation these targets encourage isomorphism.

3.3.4.3 Institutional planning

Both long term plans and annual performance plans are important for effective organisational planning. Universities are expected to produce a strategic plan and update it at least every five years (DHET, 2015a). However, this analysis revealed several institutionalised practices that hamper proper planning.

Firstly, as acknowledged by the Minister, the late release of the annual statements does not allow universities to plan and develop a well-coordinated strategy and universities have repeatedly requested an earlier release of the funding statement (DHET, 2012). In the 2015 Ministerial statement, a confidentiality clause has been introduced, stating that information relating to the budget for the university sector is confidential until the Minister of Finance delivers his budget speech in February of the following year. Furthermore, since the introduction of earmarked grants, no certainty about the duration of the grants has been provided. It is stated that grants will continue until a date to be determined by the Minister. Initially, non-satisfactory reporting of the earmarked grants or not meeting enrolment targets could result in discontinuation of the funding. However, in the revised funding framework stricter measures are proposed, such as a restriction on student growth or immediate corrective measures to be taken against a university whose actual teaching input unit units deviate from its planned totals (DHET, 2015b). The whole notion of clauses for non-performance creates a volatile trust relationship between government and universities and do not promote risk-taking, something universities ought to be encouraged to do as organisations that have to foster innovation.

Secondly, some grants, for example, the Teaching Development grant did not succeed in reducing the dropout rate at universities, which remains alarmingly high at more than 40 percent (Cloete, 2011). With the problem prevailing, it begs the question as to whether the grant has

indeed been the right mechanism to address the problem. From an organisational perspective it introduces the risk of implementing national overarching solutions, through prescriptive earmarked grants, thereby restricting universities and, as a result, universities find themselves in situations where solutions are neither optimal nor satisfying because they are disconnected from the root problems to be solved.

Thirdly, whilst it is recognised that enrolment planning, including the planning of staff capacity and their associated research output, is a focused field, insufficient support and poorly integrated processes encompass the national enrolment planning process. It does not take cognisance of the fact that enrolments are highly dependent on the results of the school system as well as the financial support available to students or the integrated approach required to plan effectively. Infrastructure and student accommodation plans are for example not considered during enrolment planning. It is also not sensitive to the fact that an over- or under enrolment in year n, will have a carry-on effect for the next three to four years since the students remain in the system for the duration of the qualification. In 2019 three-year enrolment plans were replaced with a six-year planning cycle. These enrolment targets become in effect a contract between the Ministry and university councils. Very few universities were able to produce accurate three-year plans, so longer planning cycles might prove to be more challenging, especially given the uncertainty about funding for infrastructure, student housing, as well as the impact of the introduction of free higher education.

3.3.4.4 Relationship between state and university

Although public universities depend on state funds, the government, in turn, depends on universities to drive knowledge production, application, and innovation. However, when looking at the choice of words and expressions in the funding policy text, as summarised in figure 3.4, it is clear that the relationship between the state and universities is increasingly becoming a power relationship where the dominance of state is increasing and institutional autonomy is decreasing.

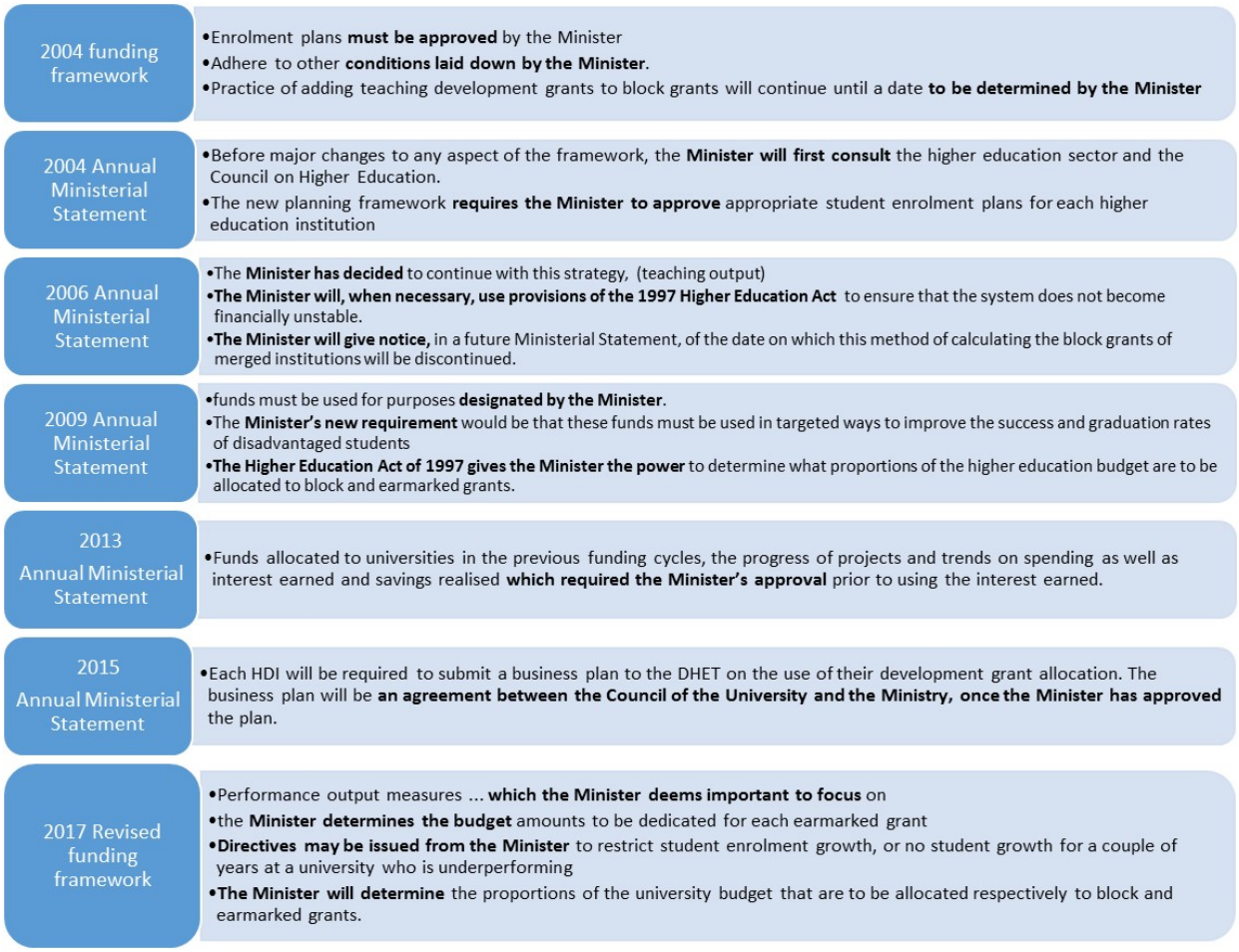


Figure 3-4 Phrases from annual Ministerial Statements highlighting the increasing state dominance

Words like "*consulting*" have been replaced by "*directives*" and phrases like "the *Minister's new requirement*", "*which the Minister deems important*" and "*gives the Minister the power*" have crept into the Ministerial statements. The external environment contributes to shaping the mission of public universities at the organisational level.

3.3.4.5 Decision-making and institutional culture

The impact of the funding framework on decision-making and institutional culture also needs some exploration as organisational leadership is affected by factors such as stronger accountability measures and micro-management. One school of thought underscores the value and culture of universities. It describes academics as a scientific community sharing the same norms and values that enable consensual decision-making and the ability to overcome individualistic and private antagonisms (Goodman, 1962; Musselin, 2006). Clark (1998)

concurs with this view but broadened the community to include not only academics but also support staff and students as actors in the community. The second school of thought that rejects the consensus-view is derived by researchers such as Baldridge (1971) and Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) who argue that power relationships are present in universities and negotiations and political exchanges have become part of decision-making. According to Pfeffer and Salancik (1978) the greater the 'resource dependence', the greater the quest for power. Both the rational, consensus, and negotiation views were challenged by new notions of universities as places of bureaucratic decision-making and complex system thinking. Mintzberg (1980) labels universities as professional bureaucracies. There are several indicators in the ministerial statements pointing towards the gradual shifting of boundaries during decision-making. Not only is more and more funding allocated to universities through earmarked grants, but spending regulations are becoming more rigid and reporting requirements more stringent, leading to governmental bureaucracy.

When analysing the distribution of public funding over a period, a few key issues emerged. The block grant for teaching input and output as well as research output plus, decreased from 87% of the total allocation in 2004 to less than 68% in 2017. The funding that became available as a result of the decrease in the block grants, were allocated to institutions in the form of earmarked grants. Although more funding was dedicated to earmarked projects by the minister, it did not provide additional income to institutions; it merely became a different allocation driver with stricter accountability and reporting requirements, perceived by academics as bureaucratic and contributing to increased managerialism.

State subsidy has gradually decreased. The Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) is higher than the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and the state allocation for the last number of years was constantly lower than the HEPI. Amongst the key items used to determine the HEPI are staff salaries, recurrent expenses, utility costs (especially electricity) and security and cleaning contracts. Foreign exchange-based expenses in the form of books, electronic databases, scientific journals, computer hardware and software, and research equipment also increased as a result of the exchange rate. The ratio between government funds, student fees and private income in South Africa was 38%, 33% and 28% in 2014 (DHET, 2015a). Universities in South Africa are allowed to set their fees. As a result, tuition fees vary substantively between institutions (CHE, 2013). In South Africa, the funding to higher education as a percentage of

GDP was 0.68% in 2004/2005 and 0.72% in 2015/2016 (DHET, 2015b; Erfort, Erfort and Zbarazskaya, 2016). As a result, institutions have become increasingly reliant on tuition fees and third-stream income to balance the budget. The increase in tuition fees has reached a point where a large group of the population, the missing middle, cannot pay for tuition, yet their income is above the qualifying threshold for national student financial aid.

3.4 Fee protests

The previous section clearly described the decrease in state subsidy and an increase in tuition fees to balance the books of universities and also the increasing power of government over the finances of universities. For years there has been a history of routine protests regarding issues such as rising tuition fees, student access and financial exclusion in South Africa. Although these protests were taken note of, they were never responded to in a holistic way except for addressing the symptoms thereof (Davids and Waghid, 2016; Langa, 2017). During the massive fee-free protests actions, many students joined the protest action although they did not support the violence. In a similar vein, external stakeholders based their legitimacy on media reports. Very few people from the outside understood the intricacies of running a university. Secondly, people that attended a university, tend to remember a university as it was when they attended and parents often send their children to their alma mater for the same experience.

Three main participants in the current financial crisis in education are: government, society, which includes students, and the university itself. Universities cannot be isolated from society as they have to respond to the training needs of society. In South Africa, with high levels of unemployment, education is viewed as a tool through which the poor can achieve liberation from poverty, racism, classism, sexism, and patriarchy. Actions such as academic exclusion and exclusions based on outstanding fees have been institutionalised at public universities, using the guiding principles of academic performance and financial sustainability. The last part of this chapter describes some of the key institutionalised practices that fuelled the fee protests.

3.4.1 Tuition fees

This recognition of higher education as both a public and private good, provided universities with the sanctioning power to charge tuition fees and to exclude students with outstanding fees. In the case of the institutionalisation of the guiding principle of the setting of tuition fees, a clear detachment of the university budgeting process and the community's socio-economic conditions

were observed. Universities assert that the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) is higher than the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and therewith justify the annual increase in tuition fees, although being cognisant of the fact that high tuition fees prohibit access for a large portion of the population. Universities used the differentiation of validity context to focus on financial sustainability and safeguarding South Africa's academic project, whilst regarding issues of financial support to needy students as falling outside the university's validity context (USAF, 2016). Institutions tend to isolate the validity context of their rationality criteria towards the environment. The more successful they are, the more autonomous they are in pursuing their goals and in excluding other criteria of action from their validity context.

The institutionalisation of a guiding idea has a direct impact on decision-making. If rationality criteria successfully claim dominant behavioural relevance within a certain validity context, the problem-solving capacities of this context are restricted. Only problems that can be solved by the respective rationality criteria are dealt with. For homogenising the orientation for social action, subsequent problems and contingencies that arise through the institutionalisation of rationality criteria are externalised and treated in another action context. Although acknowledging the fee crisis; the affordability and financial support options for potential and current students were not considered during the setting of tuition fees.

The aforementioned arguments are based on the assumption that the payment of tuition fees is a barrier to access and that fee-free education is an outcry from the poor to get access to higher education. However, numerous research results have indicated that fee-free education did exactly the opposite and that the elimination of tuition fees merely benefitted the elite (Archer, 2015; Bray, 2002). Furthermore, there is also little doubt that free education without any obligation after graduation is not sustainable in a developing country with a high demand for university access (CHE, 2016b; Cloete, 2015).

3.4.2 Transformation

The demands to remove statues from some campuses were ascribed to colonial practices, slow transformation, and a display of white privilege. The differentiation of public universities in section 3.2 largely speaks to the market segment that these institutions serve as well as the type of qualifications being offered. However, some universities are classified as historically white universities, whilst others are referred to as historically disadvantaged universities. These

classifications are an inheritance from the pre-merger higher education landscape. Together with these classifications, symbols, culture, and traditions were also brought forward as they are institutionalised practices (Langa, 2017; Siyabonga, 2015).

3.4.3 Access

The management of enrolment targets is done by balancing the projected figures in the enrolment plan with the actual enrolments. Meeting enrolment targets reinforces the notion that university positions are ‘sought after'. The output is measured by the number of graduates and the tracking of their career paths. Good employment rates affirm legitimacy.

The debate around access and costs also touches on the issue of higher education as a fundamental right. Cloete (2015) proposes that steps should be taken to make higher education progressively affordable. Parker (2016) supports the notion of affordable higher education but also argues that the Constitution did not declare higher education participation to be a fundamental right; rather an advancement opportunity. Therefore, costs should be shared amongst beneficiaries. The rational myth called ‘effective enrolment management' ignores the fact that many young people never apply to higher education because of funding constraints. As the future of young people outside the university falls outside the action context of universities, it is externalised. However, for the students that come from those very poor communities, it is not external to their social context. This dichotomy between the external environments of the different actors contributed to the de-legitimisation of the university's financial decisions. Furthermore, universities offer academic qualifications and as such, they have a proven influence on their graduates' career prospects; however, they are not responsible for the supply-and-demand structures of particular career opportunities. This approach towards access to universities can be ascribed to institutionalisation and the externalisation of contingencies.

3.4.4 Outsourcing

Part of the build-up to the violent student protests was the demand to insource non-core services such as cleaning-, catering- and security services. Outsourcing of non-core activities, such as security and garden services, has been implemented by all public universities, justified by the organisation of economic activity, as universities strive to survive in the current market environment and to leverage economies of scale. Several institutions succumbed to the pressure and insourced these services. As institutions tend to conform and also maintain legitimacy in

the community, the insourcing by some institutions increased the pressure on other universities to maintain legitimacy and shifted the boundaries of the validity context of institutions. Universities suddenly had to account for the consequences of outsourcing and were labelled as ethically indifferent.

The tension between workers and university managers arises from conflict between two (possibly contradictory) criteria for social action that claim validity. To remain financially sustainable and optimise spending on academic activities, non-core services are outsourced by universities. The decision to outsource is also influenced by the supply and demand criteria of the labour market (Lepsius, 2017). The personal living conditions of outsourced workers are excluded from the scope of institutionalised criteria of the economic efficiency of universities (Lepsius, 2017). Universities, although under financial pressure, had to justify how 'exploitation' of the poor through outsourcing can be justified by universities claiming to be committed to social justice. Furthermore, the rational myth of internal administration, allowing space for the different areas of knowledge that universities make the effort to conserve, increase, and transmit; used to free universities from the principles that govern contemporary bureaucratic organisations such as earnings, productivity, and profitability. However, the introduction of new public management principles has added a conflicting validity context. From the aforementioned, it is clear that the institutionalisation of a guiding idea is connected to a social fragmentation of the real world. In a diffused action situation of social differentiation, the legitimacy power of a guiding principle will be challenged by other guiding principles also claiming validity in the same action context.

3.5 Conclusion

South African higher education is underpinned by low participation rates, low undergraduate completion rates, and the absence of a well-functioning expanded post-school sector. Over time the decline in state subsidies, increases in tuition fees and inadequate NSFAS funding all resulted in accumulating student debt and the exclusion of many students from higher education. The incapacity of the post-school system to absorb large numbers of new students, the dysfunctional basic education system and the decrease in state subsidy became a national crisis. This societal crisis is highlighted by the national student protests that have dominated South African higher education since 2015. The protest actions highlight the need for transformation

at higher education institutions as well as a deeper analysis of the role of senior management in steering change at universities.

This chapter highlighted the features of universities as highly institutionalised organisations and also illustrated some of the legitimacy demands that universities had to face during radical change. The crisis facing universities emerged: What happens when higher education, which is seen as a valuable resource to improve and converge society, actually widens the gap in society?

This chapter traced the key issues that emerged during the protests. University leaders come from different academic disciplines, ranging from engineering, health sciences, biochemistry, political studies, and sociology to mention but a few. Furthermore, appointment criteria are known to be skewed towards academic reputation, rather than crisis leadership management (Jansen 2017b). Nonetheless, university leaders had to steer universities during this period of radical change. Throughout this process, senior managers have to remain calm and constraint, whilst adjusting the main message for the different stakeholders. Senior managers found themselves between the impending crisis of a decrease in state funding and uncertainty from tuition fees in a poor economy. Academic future and financial sustainability were at risk.

The fight for free education is not over. Although free higher education has been made available for the poor, higher education is still not free for the missing middle and the sustainability of the current model is questioned (Niselow, 2019). The next wave of demands is also likely to erupt when the students studying for free, want to proceed with postgraduate studies, for which no national funding support model is available.

The next chapter outlines the research methodology and methods that were used to further investigate how university executives meet the demand for legitimacy from internal and external stakeholders during a radical and controversial change process.

CHAPTER 4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND METHODS

The purpose of this chapter is to outline the research methodology and methods for sense-making of how university executives meet the demand for legitimacy from internal and external stakeholders during a controversial change process. The principal objectives of this study are fourfold and the following sub-questions are formulated: (i) which institutionalised practices triggered radical change at South African public universities; (ii) how do legitimacy demands on universities influence its ability to deal with radical change; (iii) how do change agents identify and reconsider rational myths during radical change; and (iv) how do personal values and emotions of change agents with varying positions and levels of power within the university influence radical change?

The chapter commences by elucidating constructivism as the research paradigm. A summary of the differences between positivism and constructivism is provided. This is followed by a description of the ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning the study. Subsequently, a motivation for the selection of multiple data-collection techniques is provided. The research methods are outlined as well as a description of how meaning was constructed through data analysis. The chapter proceeds with a description of the ethical considerations as well as the steps taken to ensure the validity and reliability of the research. The chapter concludes with a description of the participant profile.

4.1 Constructivist research paradigm

In research, the term paradigm is used to pronounce a researcher's worldview and as such the perspective and set of shared and abstract beliefs that inform the interpretation of data (Kivunja and Kuyini, 2017; Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006). This research falls within a constructivist research paradigm. In stark contrast to Kolakowski's (1972) doctrine of positivism, social constructivism recognises multiple experiences and believes that social actors, who each experience a different reality that can be articulated through words and narratives, can provide a new understanding of a world in which facts and values cannot be separated. Where positivists believe that there is only one reality, constructivists are of the view that there is no real truth, but rather multiple realities that need to be understood. Phenomenology was used as the research methodology. Table 4.1 summarises the differences between positivism and social

constructivism as research paradigms based on a literature analysis (Angrosino, 2011; Charmaz, 2006; Genzuk, 2003; Mackenzie and Knipe, 2006; Reeves, Kuper and Hodges, 2008).

Positivism	**Social constructivism**
Privileging quantitative methods	Privileging qualitative methods
Typically experimental, where pre-identified measurable variables are manipulated to identify the influence on other variables	Assumes that the social world should be studied in its normal state, not manipulated by the researcher.
Standardised, repeatable procedures using valid instruments to collect data are used to ensure procedural objectivity.	Not replicable and research is not based on a large number of cases.
Positivists view the relationship between society and the individual as a relationship where society exercises coercive control over individuals.	Social constructionists do not disregard the influence of societies on individuals but acknowledge that an individual has a conscience and is not just a puppet who reacts to external social forces.
Science is produced through physical or statistical control of variables. Through measurement, valid and conclusive knowledge is produced. This knowledge can then justifiably replace the myths and dogma of traditional views or common sense.	Many of the statistics positivists rely on, are themselves socially constructed. A range of philosophical and sociological ideas, symbolic interactionism and phenomenology are drawn upon, as the social world cannot be understood in terms of simple causal relationships or by classifying social events under universal laws.
Control over variables, such as physical control in experiments, or through statistical control in survey research is required. Without control over variables, a researcher can do no more than speculating about causal relationships, since no basis for testing hypotheses is available.	Researchers are fallible human beings and subjectivity is part of the research methodology. The researcher's primary objective is to describe concrete experiences of life, including the context, what happens within a particular culture and of the beliefs and social rules that are used as resources.
Positivists search for universal laws.	Any hope of discovering *laws* of human behaviour is misplaced, it is suggested, since human behaviour is continually constructed, and reconstructed, based on people's interpretations of the situations they are in.
The key terminology that underpins positivism is objectives, detachment, trends, comparisons, correlations, generalisability, replicable and scientific.	The key terminology that underpins social constructivism is subjective, involvement, rapport, feelings, empathy, rich descriptions, individual motives and humanistic.

Table 4-1 Differences between positivism and social constructivism

Despite these differences, there are also commonalities. Just as the focus of constructivism is to uncover the laws that govern human behaviour, the focus of positivism is to discover the laws that govern the physical world. Both constructivists and positivists perceive social phenomena

as objects existing independently of the researcher and research findings can unlock knowledge of the social world that is superior in validity to that of the society being studied. Finally, the quest for objectivity is underscored by both approaches and henceforth any practical or political commitments on the part of the researcher should be peripheral to the research process to avoid potential distortion.

The next section describes the epistemological and ontological assumptions that underpin the study and guide the interpretation of data as well as the research methodology and research methods that were used to gather data.

4.1.1 Ontology

Ontology provides an understanding of how the known world is constituted (Scott and Usher, 2004). This research is underpinned by the ontological assumption that reality is not objective, but rather the outcome of individual cognition. Institutional theory – that is used in this study as a lens to view radical change at universities - is also underpinned by certain ontological assumptions. This research was undertaken to better understand the role and behaviour of university officials as social actors during radical change through the lens of institutional theory and as such the research paradigm should be congruent with the principles of institutional theory.

Concurring with Scott's (1987) view and as outlined in chapter two, institutionalisation is understood as a process of creating reality in the social world. This research supports the notion that social order is based on a shared social reality that is a human construction created through interaction and ongoing externalisation. Sense-making stems from the premise that defining reality is an ongoing process of retrospective efforts to make sense of what has happened in an attempt to create order. Sense-making precedes action because situations are only understood upon completion. In this way, sense-making essentially tries to answer the question: how did something become an event and what does it mean? Sense-making emerges from retrospective connections with past experiences and dialogue amongst social actors who act on behalf of larger social units. Its contribution to knowledge emerges from presumptions about the future that is articulated concurrent with actions that become increasingly clear as they unfold (Austen and Kapias, 2016; Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld, 2005).

The philosophical assumption is that an institution is more than the combination of regulations, long-term social actions and arrangements. In this sense, an institutional analysis should focus on describing and explaining the relationship between ideas and the structuring of social action by examining which guiding ideas structure social action and establish conditions for legitimacy. Furthermore, during institutional analysis, an understanding of the contemporary institutional environment is an important analytic key in understanding the university as an institution.

4.1.2 Epistemology

In the constructivist research paradigm, the view is that knowledge is established through meanings that are attached to the phenomena being studied. The epistemology that guides this research is grounded on authoritative knowledge, as data were gathered through observation, semi-structured interviews, and document reviews, capturing the personal experiences of senior university managers. In this way, knowledge is enriched through personal experiences (Coll and Chapman, 2000; Cousins, 2002). In this research the researcher is also a senior university manager. With constructivism being the conceptual lens through which I examined the research question, collected data, and constructed meaning; a phenomenological research methodology was adopted.

4.2 Phenomenology

Based on a constructionist view, phenomenological research usually embodies lived experiences, perceptions, and feelings of social actors about a phenomenon. It becomes a powerful approach for surfacing deep issues and making voices heard (Lester, 1999; Rockmore, 2011). Derived from the Greek word *phainein*, which means 'to appear', the purpose of phenomenological research is to seek reality from social actors' narratives of their lived experiences. A lived experience is pre-reflective as it is experienced by the social actor finding himself or herself in the situation. Being in the situation does not provide an opportunity for reflection, making sense or theorising about it. An in-depth description of the phenomenon can however be interpreted for meaning and sense-making. The focus of a phenomenological study is the human consciousness of the experience and not so much the experience itself. So, phenomenology is the study of these manifestations as they are in themselves (Moran, 2000; Vagle, 2014). In this study, the object of the phenomena is sense-making of legitimacy during

the introduction of free higher education at universities in South Africa. The subject is senior university managers who were selected as participants for this study.

According to Sokolowski (2000), researchers using a phenomenological approach seek to study social actors' experience of phenomena and the ways situations present themselves through these experiences. The way things appear cannot be separated from the existence of things - things are as they appear and appear as they are. Dahlberg et al. (2008) further clarifies phenomenological research as "*the study of what shows itself in acts of knowledge*". In addition, phenomenology tries to describe and interpret experiences that may require special expressive linguistic and rhetorical sensitivities. This is called the vocative dimension of phenomenology. To enrich this study, a metaphoric analysis is used to enrich the analysis and interpretation of the data.

Phenomenological research recognises the role of subjective meanings in social life and social interaction. Culture is embedded in institutions to such an extent that institutions are often described as having their own culture. Based on the institutionalised nature of universities, radical organisational change has to take cognisance of the context of social norms and functional rules. On the one hand, radical change may be viewed as a result of norms and rules that affect universities, whilst, on the other hand, it may be interpreted as an alteration of internal institutional norms and rules. In both cases, the influence of social norms and rules on individual participants as well as management teams, are of critical importance (Whitehead, 2005).

Phenomenological research is characterised by the use of lived experiences and the methods of epoché and reduction. Phenomenological research shows similarities to other qualitative research approaches such as ethnography, hermeneutics (interpretive research) and symbolic interactionism. To explain how the phenomenological research process is structured, the following key terms are elucidated in the next section: lived experience, epoché, and intentionality.

4.2.1 Lived experience

Phenomenological research investigates the meaningful and significant lived experience of actors with a phenomenon. It is important to elucidate the term 'lived experience' to present the scope of this study. Whilst two actors can find themselves in the same situation, they might have

a different experience due to previous experiences, backgrounds, how they grew up, etc. (Creswell 2007). These differences can be a result of belonging to different institutions, such as a religious community, political affiliation, family, or work. Emerging behavioural patterns, rational myths, the expressive culture evident in language, music, art and the material culture as represented by technologies and human-made material objects, also become evident. The shared history of a group also influences a social actor's experience of a phenomenon. Participants have different ways of expressing themselves, henceforth it is the task of the researcher to decipher the specific cultural and individual expressions within the collected data sets.

Phenomenology as a research method presumes that only social actors that have experienced a phenomenon can converse about it to the outside world. Epistemologically, phenomenological research is based on a paradigm of personal knowledge and subjectivity and emphasises the importance of the perspective and interpretation of the individual (Lester, 1999). The core philosophical viewpoint of phenomenological research stems from the belief that consciousness is central in creating meaning. An understanding of the subjective consciousness is paramount in enhancing sense-making. Subsequently, the study of direct experiences taken at face value and observing the behaviour of actors is central in phenomenological studies (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007). Even though phenomenologists seem to have different views on particular issues, there is general agreement on the core philosophical viewpoints as a belief that the consciousness is central, and understanding the subjective consciousness is important (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007; Creswell, 2007; Lester, 1999). This view posits that consciousness has some specific structures that are gateways to gain direct knowledge through reflection. This philosophical underpinning guides the researcher in understanding the phenomena at a conscious level of its appearance (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

4.2.2 Epoché

A process closely associated with *phenomenological research is epoché*. This process involves the avoidance of prejudgment through the filtering of biases and assumptions to enhance our understanding of a phenomenon in terms of its intrinsic system of meaning. Epoché means that the researcher must attempt to enter an 'open space' to embark on a process to understand the phenomenon or experience. Open means that no preconceptions should clutter the data gathering and data analysis. Reduction, which is regarded as an attitudinal and intuitive practice, means that once the researcher enters the research space, the meaning of the phenomenon as it appears

in the researcher's consciousness framework must be closed (Lester, 1999). To avoid prejudgement, phenomenological research does not promote the formulation of hypotheses at the start of the study and requires researchers to set aside personal assumptions or interpretations (Langdridge, 2008).

To this extent, precautionary steps must be taken to remove personal bias and subjective interpretation of another social actor's reality (Chan, Yuen-ling, and Wai-tong, 2013). To improve the validity of this research, the interpretation of the data was also given to an independent researcher to identify themes and categories of data. The use of multiple forms of data collection assisted in enhancing validity as the phenomenon could be considered from more than one perspective. Furthermore, I intentionally refrained from influencing participants' understanding of the phenomenon.

4.2.3 Intentionality

It is important to unpack the different theories around intentionality as these theories impact our understanding and definition of the phenomenon under investigation. The work done by Husserl and Heidegger will be primarily considered next (Appelbaum, 2014). Husserl (1962) approached a phenomenon as a mental state, intrinsically intentional to the social actor and also intrinsically meaningful. McIntyre and Smith (1989) went on to explain that social actors might have a similar experience but the way they respond can vary in different contexts and through different conscious acts. Husserl (1962) advocates that researchers ought to move away from preconceived assumptions about the phenomenon or situation; with specific reference to cultural, social and theoretical facets; to reveal the essence thereof.

The lack of ontological focus by Husserl, led to a dissimilar approach advocated by Heidegger (1976), stating that phenomena cannot be reduced to an object that is simply there, as all phenomena are shaped by historical and cultural assumptions (Appelbaum, 2014). Work done by Heidegger (1998) stressed that the work of phenomenology is "*to let what shows itself be seen from itself, just as it shows itself from itself*". This statement implies that although phenomena reveal themselves, there is also meaning concealed behind that appearance and that a phenomenon has a reality and a truth that extends beyond an observer's perception thereof (Heidegger, 1998).

Pertaining to the study of a phenomenon, the intentionality has two interrelated and interdependent dimensions: noema and noesis. Noema represents the object of experience or action, reflecting perceptions, feelings, thoughts, memories, and judgments regarding the object. Noesis then becomes the act of experience, such as perceiving, feeling, thinking, remembering, or judging. The act of experiencing phenomena influences the meaning attached to the phenomenon (Cilesiz, 2011*;* Husserl, 2002). In this study, while feelings, thoughts and memories of senior managers are the noema of the phenomenon, the leadership action during this period of radical change is the noesis of the phenomenon.

Phenomenological reduction is also a step that has to be taken to improve the validity of the data. Phenomenological reduction is the process where the researcher eliminates overlapping, repetitive, vague expressions and statements that are made during the research, but not directly related to the focus of the study (Soule and Freeman, 2019).

4.2.4 Triangulation

Researchers often associate triangulation with the quality and validity of a qualitative study as it allows for the research phenomenon to be studied from multiple perspectives (Denzin, 2013; Tracy, 2010). In this study three forms of triangulation are used: data triangulation, methodological triangulation and theoretical triangulation. Data triangulation refers to the process of collecting data from different sources whilst methodological triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods of analysis (Denzin, 2013). Theoretical triangulation involves the adoption of different theoretical positions to interpret a data set (Flick, 2004).

Triangulation is particularly important as one method on its own is not reliable. Interviews, document analysis, and observation were used to collect data. Drawing upon multiple sources of data collection assisted in seeking corroboration of the findings. The data analysis focused on the identification of themes as well as metaphor analysis. An established theory is underpinned by a set of assumptions about a focus of inquiry (Agnes and Norwich, 2007). The use of theoretical triangulation provided an opportunity to broaden the assumptions and also the intuitive guidance about the focus of the analysis and the kind of data to be considered as meaningful or irrelevant. This theoretical triangulation already started in the literature review in chapter two, where institutional theory and sense-making are described. The points of

convergence enriched and extended the theoretical understanding. In this way, triangulation contributes to an information-rich study and reduces the risk of coincidental associations and methodical biases due to a specific method being used. It also allows for a comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Denzin (2013) argues that triangulation can lead to three possible outcomes: the convergence of findings, inconsistencies in findings that do not confirm a single proposition about a social phenomenon, or contradictory views of the phenomenon. I am of the view that any of the aforementioned outcomes have the potential to enhance the sense-making of legitimacy during radical change. Triangulation contributes to the depth of the research and enhances the drawing of research conclusions (Agnes and Norwich, 2007, Denzin, 1989).

4.3 Research method

Typical phenomenological research employs three kinds of data collection: interviews, observation, and documents. This, in turn, produces three kinds of data: quotations, descriptions, and excerpts of documents, resulting in narrative descriptions as the result. This study used participant observation since the researcher is also a social agent, and forms part of senior managers that had to deal with the change at universities, from the start of the #FeesMustFall movement until the implementation of free higher education.

A qualitative research method is used. The goal of the qualitative investigation is to understand the complex world of human experience and behaviour during the radical change from the perspective of those involved in the situation of interest. Social actors play a prominent role in institutional theory and radical change and as such at the practices and cultures that become embedded in institutions. Schofer and Meyer (2005) describe institutional culture as emanating from the organic and dynamic way in which social actors see and interpret the world, organise themselves, conduct their affairs, affect lives, and position themselves in the workplace. The aforementioned strengthens the choice of qualitative research as a methodology and recognises the vital role that the culture and values of social actors play in mediating the everyday activities that require both the assessment of knowledge and the construction of meaning. Kozleski (2017) supports this view by also acknowledging that interactions between individuals within institutions are cultural. Yin (1994) claims that qualitative research, as opposed to quantitative studies, generally requires a broader and less restrictive design and that the research method can

be refined as the study and data gathering process progresses. This is referred to as an interactive model by Maxwell (2016).

A basic principle of qualitative research is that data analysis should be conducted simultaneously with data collection (Coffey, 2014). This allows the researcher to progressively focus the interviews and observations and decide how to test any emerging conclusions. As part of the research design, the data collection, sampling, research relationship with interviewees and data analysis are briefly discussed in the next section.

4.4 Data collection methods

According to Creswell (2007), phenomenological research is suited for a research setting with a standardised group of participants. Standardised in this context implies that participants of the study should all have significant and meaningful experiences of the phenomenon being investigated and they are all on senior management level at public universities. Participants in a phenomenological study should have momentous and meaningful experiences of the phenomenon being investigated (Creswell, 2007; Moustakas, 1994). Multistage sampling was used, moving from random sampling to snowball sampling. The participant sample was expanded by asking a participant to recommend other participants whom they feel can contribute to the research, as commonly applied in phenomenological studies (Creswell, 2007).

4.4.1 Observation

During the observations, the field notes taken by the researcher assisted in uncovering and reflecting on what has been observed and experienced. To conduct these observations successfully, the researcher must be committed to getting close to the situation being observed in its natural setting whilst reporting factually what is observed and to find out the points of view of participants being observed (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1995).

In addition to interviews, ordinary "informal" conversations, which, unlike interviews, do not have a particular purpose although a questioning technique may be used, may yield invaluable information. When conducting interviews, it is important to provide a framework within which respondents can express their understanding in their own terms. The extent of participation of the researcher can vary along a continuum - from being completely immersed in the programme

to being a completely independent spectator. This study falls on the right bottom side of the spectrum as indicated in figure 4.1 with the researcher being an active participant.

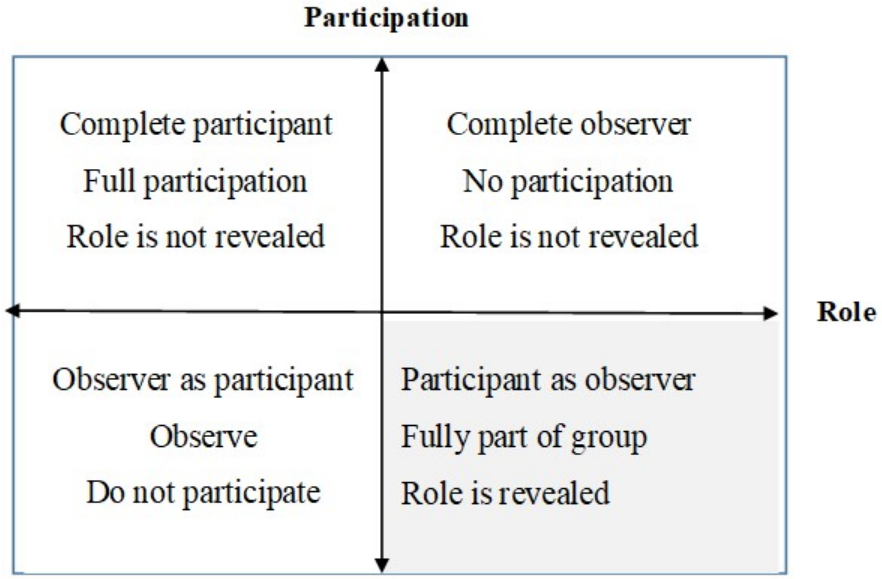


Figure 4-1 Spectrum of researcher roles in phenomenological research

Gobo (2011) highlights the fact that the researcher's existing knowledge of the lingua franca of the specific environment, in this case, the higher education landscape, to be studied can add to the complexity of the interpretation of the data. This can be ascribed to the fact that knowledge of expressions used during interviews are investigated, recognised and codified by using the same categories embedded in the everyday interpretation of the environment. However, this risk of circular cognitive processing is mitigated by conducting the study through a specific theoretical lens – in this instance institutional theory - and by consciously using a reflexive research practice.

A reflexive practice, also referred to as critical subjectivity, cannot eliminate a researcher's personal bias, but can still increase the trustworthiness of the study by consciously raising personal values and beliefs and by making it known (Maxwell, 2016; Watt, 2007). Reflexivity concerns thoughtful, analytic self-awareness of a researcher’s experience, reasoning and overall impact throughout the research process (Dahlberg et al., 2008). Sangasubana (2011) adds that the embeddedness of the researcher in the research can also contribute positively to the study as some things can be understood even if not said. Thus being positioned either as an insider or outsider affects observation, interpretation, and the creation of meaning. In both cases, care should be taken to document the research analysis process carefully and systematically. The

following practical considerations were taken into account during the planning and execution of the research process.

This study stretched over 30 months. The research was conducted at the physical locations of the different universities. Although the interviews were conducted across all public universities in South Africa, the largest part of the observation was conducted on one site because of practicality and the necessity of the researcher to be physically present. Situations where a manager had to deal with change, could not always be predicted and were identified when it happened. Cooperation was needed for institutional management to be observed as well as accessed. The researcher ensured access to the institution as well as the other research participants. For this study, observation was conducted during interactions with students and other members of staff (formally and informally) and also during meetings. Participants gave informed consent and care was taken to ensure that participants knew what the research was about, why it was undertaken and how it was to be disseminated and that their professional competency was not being questioned.

The role of the researcher is key during observation. To investigate the natural environment requires time and a physical presence. The researcher cannot rely on assumptions, hypotheses, or doctrine (Shagrir, 2017). Phenomenology as a methodology requires a researcher that participates as a social agent to simultaneously maintain the necessary cognitive distance in order to perform satisfactorily scientific work, whilst studying behaviour in a natural setting (Sandiford, 2015). To achieve this, data were gathered through observation and conducting semi-structured interviews with a representative sample of senior managers at public universities. Formal and informal conversations are both important and also not only to record what is heard but also what is observed. The researcher must remain on the fence as an external observer of events and do not try to interfere or influence events or alter the behaviour of participants. Reeves et al. (2008) highlight the difficulty in predicting events and happenings as the environment is often disrupted by local, political or other changes.

One of the challenges typically associated with phenomenology is for the participant-observer to gain access to an institution. This was not a problem for this study as the researcher is working at the premise and the need for researching this period of radical change in higher education has been recognised by the sector. The purpose of such participation observation is to develop an

insider's view of what is happening and allows the researcher to not only see, but also feel what it is like to be part of the group. To be an insider requires from a researcher to be physically and socially close to the participants. At the same time, however, there is an observer side to this process. The challenge is to combine participation and observation to become capable of understanding the experience as an insider while describing the experience for outsiders.

The previous section outlined the reasons for using phenomenology as the appropriate methodology for studying the processes and associated meanings during radical change. The next section elaborates on the research participants and the interviews, observation, and document analysis as qualitative research methods within the phenomenological approach.

4.4.2 Interviews with participants

First of all, it is important to take note of the fact that the researcher is familiar with many of the interviewees. As there are only 26 public universities in South Africa, the senior managers at universities are in most cases known to one another and often belong to the same professional networks. University officials often move between universities for career advancement opportunities. This professional relationship was respected by the researcher and was perceived as positive as it enhanced the willingness of people to agree to an interview and to talk about their experiences. Researchers such as Shagrir (2017) and Harrington (2003) found that participants perceive it as less threating and easier to associate with people coming from similar professions and social identities to themselves, whereas unknown researchers are often viewed with suspicion.

Kemper et al. (2003) identified important principles for effective and reliable sampling, emphasising that the sampling method should be guided by the conceptual framework as well as the research questions and the database generated from the sample should be thorough enough to allow the drawing of clear inferences and credible explanations and generalisation of conclusions.

Although a set of questions was prepared, the questions were open-ended and allowed for rephrasing or asking follow-up questions as the interview progressed. The degree of the structure determines the format of the interview and in this case, the interview style could be clustered as focused or semi-structured. According to Maxwell (2016) the formulation and the

type of interview questions are critical for research validity and for drawing meaningful conclusions. The questions were designed to connect all the components of the research design. The questions asked during the interviews were linked to the goals of the study and divided into three sections:

The first set of questions focused on the value system of the participants in both personal and organisational contexts. According to Chan et al. (2013) establishing the context of an interviewee's experience is essential, as the meaning of experience can only be understood when placed in the context of the life of a person. The interpretation of behaviour, reactions and emotions cannot be done without a broader understanding of the participant's values. It is important to first ascertain the conceptual lenses that senior university managers use to see and interpret their experiences (Gioia and Chittipeddi, 1991). The researcher avoided implicit hypothesis-testing, and instead allowed inductive reasoning to prevail. An understanding of the participants' thoughts, world views, their place in society and the significance they attribute to their lives assisted in forming a relationship and provided a valuable context for interpreting behaviour. The second set of questions focused on emotions and thoughts during the student protests and interviewees were asked to reflect on the meaning of those experiences, whilst the final set of questions focused on emotions and thoughts during other institutional strategic changes. These questions are included in Appendix A. In summary, during the interviews, questions about the meaning of events during radical change and the thoughts, feelings, and emotions of social agents involved were the main focus. Flexibility in the interview process assisted in ensuring a rational understanding and valid representation of the participants' viewpoints (Sidani and Sechrest, 1996). To ensure confidence that any findings and conclusions drawn, adequately represent higher education managers, purposeful and extreme sampling were used to adequately capture the heterogeneity of senior university managers and to ensure that academic managers from different portfolios, as well as from different race, age, and gender groups were included in the study. During the interview process, participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. The interviews were recorded and transcribed.

4.4.3 Document review

The primary interview data were supplemented by secondary data in the form of document analysis. Qualitative document analysis is a systematic procedure for analysing or evaluating documents. Similar to other qualitative methods, with document analysis, data is examined and

interpreted to produce meaning, gain understanding and develop empirical knowledge (Bowen, 2009; Corbin and Strauss, 2008).

The terms document analysis, content analysis, and discourse analysis are often used and henceforth a summary is provided to explain the position and principles of document analysis within this study. Qualitative content analysis can be applied to many sorts of recorded communication, ranging from transcripts to interviews, recording of observations, to documents. According to (Géring, 2015) content analysis requires access to clear and objective data that allows the researcher to focus on the detail in the text, and not so much on the context in which the document was compiled or the situation that motivated the compilation of the document. Rather, the text is taken as a fact without the context of the discourse in which the text arises. Becker and Lissmann (1973) take a broader view and distinguish between two levels of content. Firstly, the main ideas and themes of the text as primary content, and secondly the context information as the covert content. This research adopts the broader view of content analysis and concur with the definition as given by Krippendorff (1980 that content analysis is an approach based on the quantification of words in text and talk. It involves the use of replicable and valid, methodologically controlled methods for making specific inferences from text to other states or properties of its source, without rash quantification.

Content analysis is different from discourse analysis regarding the type of research questions they can be used for and the coding schemes utilised. Content analysis is used for well- and pre-defined research questions, whereas discourse analysis is often used to examine linguistic repertoires and how these are linked to different representations of the social world. Discourse analysis is often applied where general research questions are formulated to explore the implicit meanings, nature, and characteristics of the social phenomenon under investigation.

Hsieh and Shannon (2005) alluded to three distinctive approaches that can be applied during content analysis: directed, conventional or summative. When using directed analysis, existing theories are used to guide the formulation of initial codes, whilst the coding categories are derived directly from the text data during conventional analysis. Summative content analysis is based on the counting and comparisons of keywords or phrases, followed by the interpretation of the underlying context. Each of the aforementioned has its implications but one of the key differentiators is when using quantitative methods, pre-defined concepts are used to scrutinise

the text whereas a qualitative method does not use pre-assumed theoretical frameworks during analysis. Whilst some researchers argue that content analysis is not the same as document analysis, this study used a combination of directed and conventional content analysis to draw meaningful conclusions.

The #FeesMustFall protest movement, as well as preceding and succeeding events, received continuous media coverage that captured the human experience and opinions of the change process. Henceforth potential valuable information was unlocked by analysing key documents that covered this period. Document reviews have several advantages that render it an efficient method to supplement primary data. First of all, the data is already available, so the focus shifts from data collection to data selection. Unlike human participants, documents are unaffected by the research and counter the concern related to reflexivity, or lack thereof, during qualitative research (Bowen, 2009). A further advantage of using documents is the low cost required to obtain the documents for this study.

Potential flaws associated with document analysis are insufficient detail and biased selectivity in the selection of documents. These potential risks were mitigated by performing a comprehensive search of documentation that covered the protests, covering the event from various sources and various perspectives. Furthermore, the data analysis was unobtrusive and nonreactive and combined with the interviews it minimised bias and enhanced the credibility of the findings. According to Bowen (2009) document analysis should follow a systematic and iterative process starting with quick scanning of the documents, followed by detail examination and interpretation. Gonzalez (2008) supports this approach and points out that documents are more than transcripts of interviews; a first-pass document could assist in identifying meaningful and relevant segments of data or text.

The criteria to be used for document analysis were the (i) the nature of the content and (ii) the authors of the document. Regarding the content, documents were selected that described the personal experiences of university managers during the fee protests and thereafter. The authorship should not be a third party (such as a journalist), but an opinion piece or reflection written by senior managers and academics themselves about their reflection of the fee protests and subsequent decisions taken. The focus was not on documents that provided a factual

overview of events, but on articles that reflected the opinions of academics and managers about the handling of the protests and the decisions taken.

4.5 Data collection process

The field research commenced with a series of interviews with senior university managers. Multistage sampling was used where I selected a sample by using different sampling methods. In the first stage, random sampling was used to select two senior managers from each public institution as listed in the institutional annual reports. Subsequently, 52 senior managers from 26 public universities were randomly identified and invited to participate in the study. The participants included senior managers from different portfolios within the university. The most common division of university staff found in the literature is that of academic and non-academic managers, whereas 'non-academic' includes professional and other support services such as finance, library, student affairs, etc. All these senior managers were active role players during the student protests, and all had unique portfolio-specific challenges and priorities to ensure continuity of the core business of the university. During the selection of participants, care was taken to ensure a representative sample across gender and race groups. Senior university managers were contacted via e-mail or telephonically to inquire about their availability and willingness to be part of the study. A total of 17 people responded and agreed to an interview. After each interview, additional participants were identified via snowball sampling, by asking participants whether they can recommend other colleagues to be interviewed. The majority of interviews were done face-to-face, with only two interviews being conducted using video-conferencing technology. Each participant was informed of the purpose of the study and had to give consent that the interview may be recorded. The interviews were recorded and also transcribed. The average length of an interview was 42 minutes.

All publicly available video clips for the period October 2015-December 2018 containing video footage of senior university managers, were scrutinised and those that contained narratives of the events were transcribed and analysed, resulting in ten transcribed recordings of vice-chancellors. The researcher was responsible for verbatim transcriptions. The time spent in transcribing was deemed to be worth the effort as it allowed an opportunity to become familiar with the data. This provided a rich set of data. In addition to this, a total of nine events were observed and notes recorded in a journal, where leaders were engaged in negotiations and discussions about the implementation of free higher education.

At the same time, an extensive and longitudinal process of identifying relevant documents for qualitative analysis took place. The #FeesMustFall protest movement received a lot of media coverage and many video clips were posted on various social media platforms and attached to media articles. An electronic search was conducted using the keywords: “South Africa” concatenated with “FeesMustFall”, “free higher education”, “leadership at universities” or “student protests”. Articles containing opinions, references to leadership and their behaviour as well as personal reflections of university staff, were identified for this study. Many of the articles contained factual reports on student protests, the situation at universities and damage caused by the violent protests. These articles were not included as it is not the focus of the study.

4.6 Data description

A total of 37 senior managers formed part of the study as indicated in table 4.2. Figure 4.2 provides an overview of the different universities where the participants are employed and the geographical footprint of the different institutions. The participants are representative of 7 of the 9 provinces in South Africa.

	Female				Male					Grand
University type	Black	Indian	White	Total	Black	Coloured	Indian	White	Total	Total
Comprehensive	2		1	3	3	2			5	8
Traditional	3		3	6	8	1	2	5	16	22
University of Technology		1		1	3		2	1	6	7
Grand Total	5	1	4	10	14	3	4	6	27	37

Table 4-2 Participant distribution per race

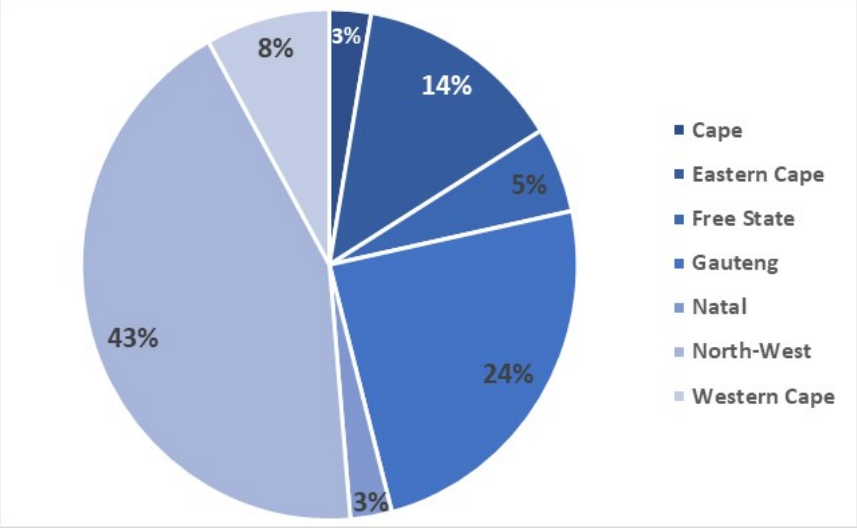


Figure 4-2 Geographical footprint of the different campuses

The following documents in Table 4.3 were identified to form part of the set of documents to be analysed:

Document	Reason for inclusion	Authors
From Marikana to #FeesMustFall: The Praxis of Popular Politics in South Africa	Perspective on the structuring of higher education in post-apartheid SA	Naicker, C. 2016
Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr BE Nzimande's Statement on Government's 2017 Fee Support to Students from Poor, Working and Middle-Class Families	Government perspective	DHET. 2016
Looking Back at the year: #FeesMustFall. The Transformer: UJ	This document alludes to various events at UJ during the radical change period.	Grobler, M., (ed), Viljoen, L., Vally, S., Vongo, 2016
The pending destruction of higher education in South Africa can be avoided	Opinion piece on public universities	Hoffman, P, 2016.
Letters from concerned students, staff, and parents	Public opinions about #FeesMustFall	Parents from students of WITS. 2016
#FeesMustFall: The academics who stand behind the students. Mail and Guardian	Voice of academic staff	Verasamy, M. 2016
Embodying human rights in #FeesMustFall? Contributions from an indecent theology	Evidence from the specific context of FMF at UKZN	Grassow, L. Le Bruyns, C. 2017.
As by fire. The end of the South African University. Cape Town: Tafelberg Uitgewers.	Contains personal reflections of university leaders	Jansen, J. 2017b.
#Hashtag: An analysis of the #FeesMustFall Movement at South African universities	To gain more insight from students themselves on how they made sense of their involvement in the protests	Langa, M. (Ed.), 2017
Narrating the 2015 Fees Must Fall movement: explanations, contestations, and forms of meaning-making in the public sphere	Provides a critical analysis of the public debate that arose around the 2015 Fees Must Fall movement.	Linden, M. 2017
'Universities shouldn't be comfortable': vice-chancellors on campus protests. Mail and Guardian	Provides a narrative of an interview with Vice-chancellor: Francis Petersen	Fazackerley, A. 2018
Student grant body NSFAS has quietly changed the rules, issuing students with cash instead of vouchers	Opinion piece on the consequences of the implementation of free higher education	Cohen, T. 2019
'It's not peacetime yet' at UCT	Contains a summary a speech made by UCT Vice-Chancellor Prof. Phakeng	Davids, N. 2019
Press Release: Planned Litigation: Non-Compliance with Employment Equity Act 55 Of 1998	Expresses a view on transformation at South African universities.	HETN Higher Education Transformation Network. 2019
The Final Report by the institutional reconciliation and transformation commission (IRTC) of the University of Cape Town	The (IRTC) was appointed following the protests and outstanding issues to be dealt with at UCT.	IRTC, 2019.
We will not be held to ransom by disrupters – Wits. Citizen.	Provides insight into campus activities after the introduction of free higher education	Okoye, C.J. 2019

Document	Reason for inclusion	Authors
An open letter to the readers of Adam Habib's 'Rebels and Rage'. Mail and Guardian.	Presents a view from academics on university leadership	Open Letter, 2019.
New partnerships can help universities regain public trust	Provides insight into the voice of vice-chancellors at an annual leadership retreat	Paterson, M. 2019.
The UCT and Wits strategies on #FeesMustFall were different for good reasons	Personal reflections from a vice-Chancellor	Price, M. 2019
Letter to USAF Chief Executive Officer from UCT student leaders	Perspective of students about the implementation of free higher education	UCT SRC. 2019.
South Africa Economic Update 12	Offers a review of South Africa's recent economic and social developments and its outlook in the context of global economic prospects	World Bank, 2019

Table 4-3 Documents identified for review

All the data sets were imported into NVivo with the necessary classification attributes to ensure that the information about the source of data is linked to the data set. The documents and observation notes were also treated as data sets and enhanced the richness of the data.

4.7 Constructing meaning through data analysis

As elucidated in section 4.2.4 methodological triangulation was used to explore the richness of the data. Meanings are also referred to by social analysts as culture, norms, understandings, social reality, typifications, ideology, beliefs, worldviews, perspectives, or stereotypes (Shagrir, 2017). To give meaning entails more than describing behaviour – it also involves the defining, justification, interpretation, and explanation of the experience. As such, the meaning becomes the underlying stimulus behind thoughts, actions and even the interpretation and application of knowledge (Chen, 2015). Halldorsdottir (2000) describes seven cyclical steps to make sense of the collected data: silence, reflection, identification, selection, interpretation, construction, and verification. Giorgi and Giorgi (2003) summarise this process in four comprehensive steps: (i) a description that entails openly reading, (ii) reduction that involves the sorting of meaningful units, (iii) followed by the search for essence and reflecting on each meaningful unit, and (iv) intentionality where the findings are related to the research questions and essential structures of the phenomena. Multiple forms of data analysis were used to enhance the depth of the research that would not have been possible using a single method. Thematic analysis and dynamic discourse analysis are subsequently described.

4.7.1 Thematic data analysis

In all of the aforementioned, the researcher's role of constructing meaning is paramount. This was done by developing coding frames that fractured data into discrete elements, and by applying methods to identify the relationships among the different elements of the text. The development of a coding frame assisted with data analysis (Roulston, 2014). Schreier (2014) adds that these categories should be clear and unambiguous and proposed three categories for a coding frame: organisational, substantive, and theoretical. *Organisational* categories are generally broad subjects or issues that the researcher establishes before the collection of the qualitative data, assuming that these categories can be anticipated with the existing knowledge at hand. Broad issues can be informed by a range of phenomena, such as events, relationships, social structures, general perspectives, processes, emotions, or repeated phrases. According to Whitehead (2005), a number of broad categories can be used to organise data. The individual participant, referring to the biological status, psychological makeup, and personal characteristics of a participant should be considered. Furthermore, networks of social relationships that influence a participant's behaviour and where a participant's behaviour influence a group, should be considered. The data analysis should already begin during the data collection so that the researcher can discover additional themes and decide whether more data should be collected (Roper and Shapira, 2000; Sangasubana, 2011). After establishing a coding frame, the collected material, in the form of written words, were grouped into meaningful categories and compared and contrasted to identify patterns. As the groups were divided into smaller sets, the emergent patterns assisted in identifying themes and possible connections between the sets of data.

The next step in the analysis was to unpack the meaning of each segment or category. *Substantive* categories are predominantly descriptive and typically contain a description of participants' thoughts and beliefs. Substantive categories ought to accurately reflect the data and provide some insight into what is happening, but do not intrinsically imply a more abstract theory. During substantive categorisation the researcher implicitly makes some sort of claim about the subject being studied—that is, they could be right or wrong, rather than simply being conceptual boxes for holding data.

To move to an abstract framework, the coded data had to be placed in *aggregated* categories that were derived either from prior theory or from retrospective sense-making. Qualitative content analysis requires pilot coding and subsequent evaluation of the coding frame in terms

of reliability and validity (Maxwell, 2016; Schreier, 2014). Pilot coding, where the coding frame is tried out on a selection of the data, is a crucial step for recognising any shortcomings in the frame before the main analysis is conducted. Further analysis of the transcripts then also seeks to identify relationships that connect statements and events within a particular context into a coherent whole (Coffey, 2014). Post-structural researchers such as St. Pierre (2013) argue that coding and categorisation alone may not necessarily produce significant or emerging theorised stories.

The pilot phase consists of the following steps: the selection of material; trial coding; evaluation and modification of the coding frame. To mitigate the risk of missing important findings, not only coding, but also an analysis of the relationships between the data segments were done. During the analysis, some pieces of data were labelled as outliers, if they did not fit with the rest of the findings. These outliers were discarded as irrelevant to the study or indicated that more data should be collected to fill a possible gap in the findings (Sangasubana, 2011). Identified themes and patterns were subsequently linked to existing literature and theories to make sense of the collected data. A summary of the thematic data analysis process is provided in figure 4.3.

According to Schreier (2014), the analysis of qualitative data should be systematic, flexible and reducing data, so that the categories and subcategories generated during coding can be mutually exclusive. Mutually exclusive does not mean that a particular text cannot be used more than once, but it should only be used once in a specific category. In phenomenological research, it is not always possible to encode information during the research or decide in advance how to categorise information. Although broad themes can be provided, the structure emerges whilst analysing data. A broad understanding of the phenomena, the identification of patterns, similarities and contradictions enables the researcher to draw broad and generic conclusions.

McNamara (2015) found sense-making a powerful approach to qualitative data collection and analysis during qualitative research. Sense-making assumes that no single unambiguous answer can be given to a question as questions about experiences and emotions are by default subjective and influenced by cultural and contextual factors. Using sense-making can help in finding the meaning of an event or action and can help a researcher to avoid a simplistic critique of an observed action or behaviour (Weick, 1995).

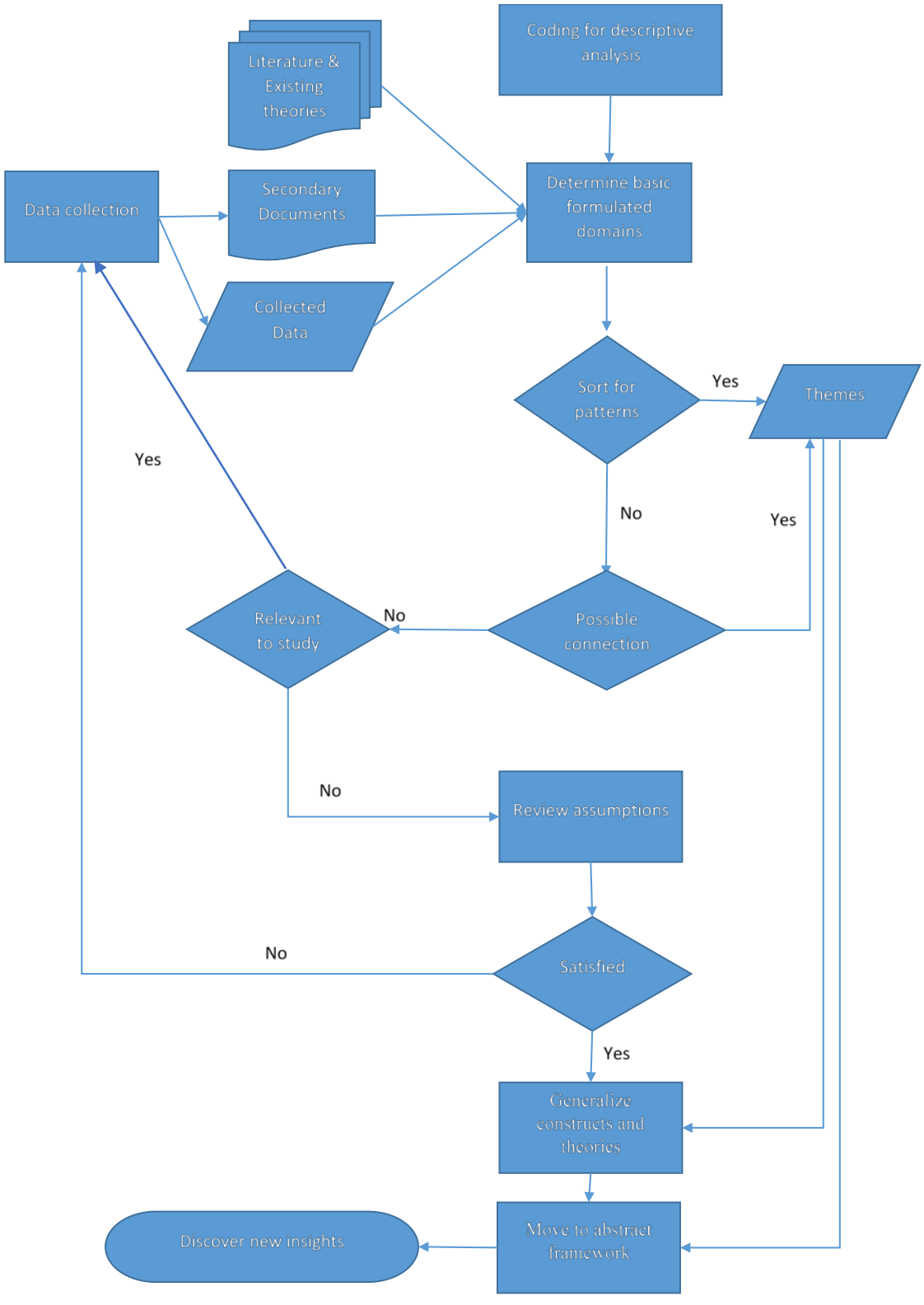


Figure 4-3 Thematic data analysis

4.7.2 Metaphor analysis

Following the thematic analysis, metaphor analysis was also conducted. Zapata and Lacorte (2007) found that the identification and discussion of metaphors as part of phenomenological studies can enrich the understanding and sense-making of participant reflections, as metaphors reveal thoughts and feelings. An initial scrutiny of the transcribed data revealed a similar pattern where participants use metaphors to express themselves and these metaphors deserve further exploration. This section focuses on an analysis of these metaphors used by participants.

Riad (2011) refers to the complementary nature of metaphors and narratives, stating that an analysis of metaphors provides an opportunity for uncovering value judgments that shape the narrative, whilst the narrative, in turn, provides the context for interpreting the meaning of a metaphor. In this way, metaphors enhance sense-making. The importance of metaphors is strengthened by the findings of cognitive linguists, who regard metaphors as a fundamental way in which people think and act. Metaphors provide a window into social thoughts and attitudes (Landau, Meier and Keefer, 2010). Although sense-making is sensitive to the cognitive intricacies that guide behaviour, it is more focused on processes by which change agents generate what they interpret, shifting the focus to invention as opposed to discovery (see 2.3.3). While the analysis of narratives assists in sense-making by providing insight into the unfolding of events and responses of participants, metaphor analysis may also allow the researcher to uncover the deeper levels of individual meaning. The qualitative data analysis described in section 4.7 and metaphor analysis were used as complementary data analysis techniques (Schmitt, 2005). The purpose of this analysis was to make sense of how senior managers used metaphors during the sense-making of radical change. The next section provides an overview of the steps taken during the discourse dynamics metaphor analysis process.

4.7.2.1 Metaphor analysis process

This study uses a discourse dynamics approach to metaphor analysis as developed by Cameron et al (2009). It also borrows some of the insights from Schmitt (2005), Kramsch (2003) and Zapata and Lacorte (2007). Cameron et al. (2009) found this method to be specifically useful within a complex and dynamic environment. Whereas Cameron et al. (2009) uses metaphor discourse analysis as part of a dynamic systems process, I use this approach as part of the sense-making of a radical change process. It is important to note the difference between linguistic and

conceptual metaphors. A conceptual metaphor is a figurative comparison in which one conceptual domain is understood in terms of another. A conceptual metaphor intends to change the perspective of the topic that is the target of the metaphor (Steen, 2008). The central claim when analysing a conceptual metaphor is that a social actor conceptualizes abstract domains metaphorically, using a domain of knowledge that is relatively concrete or well-understood.

The study of linguistic metaphors on the other side focuses on linguistic data, such as an analysis of the logical relationship between the source domain and the target domain; patterns of semantic change and language acquisition and also abstract word meanings and linguistic processing (Boroditsky, 2001; Bowerman, 1994; Falck, 2010; Glenberg and Kaschak, 2002; Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). Whilst the focus of the study of linguistic metaphors and conceptual metaphors differs, the discourse dynamics approach accepts the integrated nature of linguistic and conceptual metaphor and that there is a dynamic relationship between what actors think and the language used to express their thinking (Kövecses, 2005).

4.7.2.2 Metaphor identification

The first step was to identify the metaphors in the transcribed text. A metaphor is a link between two domains: the source and the target. The source domain is the conceptual domain from which metaphorical expressions are drawn - also known as the image donor. The domain that is talked of metaphorically is called the target domain (Deignan, 2003). Metaphors are normally derived from statements that arise naturally during the interview or via the completion of a prompt involving thinking of a metaphor (De Guerrero and Villamil, 2002). This analysis focuses on metaphors that arose spontaneously during the interviews.

The identification of metaphors is not an independent, linear process, but rather a recursive series of hermeneutic steps (Schmitt, 2005). The discourse dynamics method of metaphor analysis continually moves across levels and timescales of the period that is involved. Due to the semi-structured nature of the interviews, I could not assume that every metaphor in the text necessarily relates directly to the research questions; henceforth, a recursive process was applied that kept on moving between evidence in the transcribed text and the research questions that frame the study.

As a starting point reliability was enhanced by considering all possible linguistic metaphors. This was done by firstly checking every word to minimize the risk of missing metaphors and secondly by constantly identifying themes as they emerged from the analysis. Cameron (2008) states that multiple possibilities are evoked by the source area of the metaphor and these possibilities are influenced by participants' social-cultural contexts as well as their experience of the world. Based on the transcribed text, a total of 44 metaphors were identified.

4.7.2.3 Moving from linguistic to conceptual metaphors

The focus of this analysis was on conceptual metaphors and the next step in the analysis of the metaphors was based on the work of Cameron and Low (1999). This step involves the generalisation of conceptual metaphors from the collected linguistic metaphors and using the results for sense-making of participants' experiences, feelings, and beliefs during radical change. The process of moving from linguistic metaphors to conceptual metaphors started with the coding of the linguistic metaphors extracted from the text. The focus shifted from linguistics analysis to the identification of descriptive concepts.

4.7.2.4 Identification of vehicle terms

The next step in eliciting the metaphors was to identify the vehicle terms. In the cognitive metaphor theory, vehicle terms are referred to as source domain terms (Cameron et al., 2009). The vehicle is the figure of speech itself. The subject of the metaphor is called the tenor. The vehicle term embodies the tenor and the comparison of the vehicle with the tenor results in the meaning of the metaphor. A vehicle can be more than a single word, so it is important to decide where a metaphorical term begins and ends. Therefore, some of the identified vehicles are metaphorical phrases, rather than single words.

Vehicle terms or phrases can often be recognised as incongruent or anomalous phrases in the narrative. The study of metaphors through a discourse dynamics approach, emphasises the evolving discourse context - the metaphor cannot be understood without considering how it works in the flow of the text.

4.7.2.5 Topic domain coding

The nature of the relationship between the vehicle and the tenor must be unpacked to enhance the understanding of the participant's view. The terms expressing the comparison or 'link'

between the vehicle and the tenor are referred to as the 'topic domain' (Cameron, 2007, Pragglejaz Group, 2007). Topic domain coding is explained in the next paragraph.

The topic domain is often unspoken and has to be deciphered from the surrounding text. For example, when Executive Dean A said: "*You see it came with a situation where management was unprepared; it came like a bombshell,*" the researcher has to infer the referent of '*it'*, using the surrounding text to interpret what the metaphor '*bombshell*' refers to. Due to this complexity of trying to find an exact interpretation and taking into consideration the number of linguistic metaphors, it became impractical to identify a specific topic domain for each vehicle. I used a streamlined method of topic coding by meaningfully grouping metaphors, to identify a limited set of key topics relevant to the research topic. The process of identifying topic domains and using the topic domains to group vehicles can be also be described as a process of finding patterns of thought (Schmitt, 2005). While linguistic and conceptual metaphors are drawn from statements of individual participants, the finding of patterns is a discourse phenomenon that emerges during this bottom-up data analysis process (Cameron, 2007). Discourse can be defined at the social interaction, involving the use of language and discourse relating to a specific case in point (Schmitt, 2005). According to Cameron (2007), discourse events begin to emerge when sets of connected conceptual metaphors are clustered. The creation of these topic domains can be compared to the creation of second-order themes in the data analysis in the previous chapter, with the difference that the resulting categories are thematic and not necessarily theoretical (Lakoff and Johnson, 2003). This part of the metaphor analysis process involved the creation of sets of metaphors describing the same target domain.

The following topic domains were identified: (i) the period of turmoil preceding the announcement as well as the reaction to the announcement; (ii) institutional legitimacy during radical change, (iii) the higher education landscape and the relationship between senior management and staff during the unplanned radical change, (iv) leadership legitimacy during the change process, and (vi) the period following the introduction of free education.

Each conceptual metaphor was subsequently analysed to identify the following elements: (i) the participant; (ii) the source domain, (iii) the tenor, and (iii) the topic domain. Table 4.4 contains an excerpt from the Excel worksheet that was created for capturing the aforementioned information.

Participant	Metaphor	Source domain	Tenor	Topic domain
Director A	in their league	rank	students	During fee protests
Director A	register their complaints	Register	Students	During fee protests
Executive	like a monkey	Monkey	Management	Management behaviour
Executive Dean A	Last straw to throw for the president	straw	President	Announcement
Executive	it came as a bomb shell	bomb	Announcement	Management behaviour
Director B	senior managers are sponges	sponge	senior managers	Senior management
Director B	we are like tortoises	tortoise	senior managers	Universities
Executive Dean B	tail of two cities	Book by Charles Dickens	HE landscape	Management behaviour
Executive	Campus was a battlefield	battlefield	campus	Announcement
Director G	Universities are like a patient	patient	`university	Universities during change
Director I	open public environment became a closed jail	jail	campus	Universities after implementation
Director I	it was the perfect storm	storm	Period of turmoil	During fee protests

Table 4-4 Example of identified and codified metaphors

Metaphor analysis detangles the intricate web of thoughts through the discourse dynamics of a metaphor and by interpreting the use of the metaphor in the context of the discourse activity.

4.7.2.6 Technique of construct elicitation

The final step involved the identification and elicitation of constructs associated with each metaphor to express the participant's underlying meaning about the source domain (Schmitt, 2005, Lakoff and Johnson, 1999). There is a clear transfer of meaning between the vehicle and the tenor within the topic domain and construct elicitation brings this meaning forward. For example, the metaphor where the announcement of free higher education is compared to "*a bandage on top of the wound*" elicits constructs such as "*painful experience*", "*hiding the real problem*", "*unpleasantness*" and "*hurt*".

The constructs that capture the participant's overall thinking about the underlying meaning of the metaphor were subsequently identified and verbal labels were assigned to each construct. These constructs are visually summarised through the use of concept maps. A concept map is a diagram that depicts identified relationships between concepts – in this case, the relationships between the metaphors (vehicle terms), the associated constructs and the topic domains. The vehicle terms, as well as the tenors, are connected to the constructs with arrows. The advantage

of a concept map is that it is easy to see the interrelationships between the different metaphors as well as the different constructs and how they represent the topic domains.

4.8 Ethics

All participants in this research did so voluntarily and with informed consent. Voluntary means without any risk or undue incentive. Informed consent refers to a formal agreement about the conditions of the research between the researcher and the participants. As a researcher, I avoided imposing my own views and were open and empathetic to the responses of interviewees to ensure that preconceived ideas could be set aside. Before conducting an interview, the following were put forward to the interviewee:

- assurance of anonymity and confidentiality as a high priority;
- disclosure of my role as a researcher in this process.

It is important to follow a systematic process during content analysis and to guard against looking at the data through the researcher's assumptions and expectations. The method followed must be systematic in that it requires coding and also double coding. Double coding is where the coding is carried out twice for parts of the material to test the quality of the category definitions.

Whilst some researchers use phenomenological research purely to describe, as opposed to explain a phenomenon, more recent researchers refuted the notion that phenomenological research can be unbiased and rather emphasise the importance of how clarifications and meanings have been placed on findings, as well as making the researcher visible in the planning and conducting of the research. This research project assumed the latter position, whilst realising that validity and reliability of the research should not be compromised. Reflexive practice, careful documentation of observations as well as the recording of semi-structured interviews are central to an ethical research process (Genzuk, 2003). Supporting the view of Stanley and Wise (1993), this study saw the researcher as an interested and subjective actor rather than a disconnected and unbiased observer, whilst realising the researcher’s responsibility to put personal opinions aside, as a fundamental requirement for the validity and reliability of the phenomenological research process.

4.9 Validity and reliability

Several definitions of validity and reliability only apply to statistical analysis of empirical data. Messick (1989) restricts the term validity to empirical evidence. Bond (2003) adds that validity is ensuring that genuine scientific measures are developed. Stenbacka (2001) has gone as far as to declare the use of the concept reliability, inappropriate in a qualitative context. I, however, concur with Healy and Perry (2000) and Patton (2002) that found validity and reliability to be important in qualitative research. The application of these concepts is described in the next section.

Patton (2002) stresses that the understanding of a phenomenon, without interference, is the focus of qualitative research, whilst quantitative research often manipulates the phenomenon of interest to obtain data. Whilst the credibility in quantitative research depends on instrument construction, in qualitative research one can refer to the researcher as the instrument (Patton, 2002). Thus, it seems that when quantitative researchers speak of research validity and reliability, they usually refer to research that is credible while the credibility of qualitative research depends on the ability and effort of the researcher.

Although reliability and validity are treated as separate concepts in quantitative studies, researchers such as Stenbacka (2001) and Golafshani (2003) are of the view that these terms cannot be viewed separately in qualitative research. Instead, terms that encompass both, such as quality, credibility, dependability, transferability, neutrality, and trustworthiness are often used. In qualitative research, the assessment of reliability and validity is an ongoing process to ultimately establish the truth (Petty et al., 2009). When research is conducted from an interpretive paradigm, validity cannot be adequately summarised by a numerical value but should rather express a ‘degree of trust’ about the appropriateness of the inferences made about the conclusions drawn from collected data. The validity of a study then refers to the fact that the type of questions and data gathered must represent the question they are trying to answer and it should cover the construct of interest. In searching for the meaning of validity and reliability, Davies and Dodd (2002) associate the term *rigor* with reliability and validity in qualitative research and proposed that rigor can be measured through exploring subjectivity, reflexivity, and the social interaction during data collection. As the subjective interpreter of data contained in documents, the researcher should make the process of analysis as rigorous and as transparent as possible (Bowen, 2009). Sangasubana (2011) defines validity as the ability to collect and

analyse the data accurately and providing a true reflection. The acceptance of the study by agents inside and outside the field then becomes a test for validity. To enhance the validity, the field results must be taken back to participants to check for accuracy and adequacy of field notes. Angrosino (2011) emphasises pragmatic validity, which refers to the degree to which the findings of the study are transferable and have relevance beyond the study itself.

For a qualitative study to be reliable, the researcher - as the subjective interpreter of qualitative data contained in interviews and documents - should ensure a rigorous and transparent process during the design of the study, analysis of results and the judging of the quality of the study (Bowen, 2009). Thus, reliability would then mean that if another researcher were to conduct the interviews and perform the document analysis in the same context, they would come up with the same findings. Some qualitative researchers such as Lincoln and Guba (1985), Coffey (2014) and Seale (1999) refer to dependability as a synonym for reliability and emphasised that an inquiry audit can enhance reliability. This entails an examination of both the process and the product of the research for consistency and can be done by verifying the steps of the research; the collected data should be internally and externally consistent and credible (Sangasubana, 2011). In this way the results should be defensible and trustworthy, also making it easier to generalise the findings.

The source of information is obtained from what other people tell the researcher and what is observed. In as much as this is a strength of phenomenology, it also poses a risk. To mitigate the risk, the credibility of the source of information must be assessed and the researcher should guard against misinformation, evasion, and omissions, requiring insight and awareness from the researcher and looking at events from different angles and perspectives (Sangasubana, 2011). In this study triangulation assisted in strengthening the validity and reliability of the collected data and subsequent findings. Whitehead (2005) alludes to the fact that ‘the truth' might be tacit or explicit. Explicit culture is easy to talk about openly, whereas tacit culture, that motivates particular ideational or behavioural patterns, may not be spoken about so easily. Repetitive observation and triangulation are used to ensure that both tacit and explicit cultures are contextualised.

4.10 Summary of research method

In summary, phenomenological research within a constructivist research paradigm were used to provide insight into how sense-making of legitimacy occur during radical institutional change at universities and to answer the question: how do university executives meet the demand for legitimacy from internal and external stakeholders during such a controversial change process? The characteristics of phenomenological research, that allows a researcher to become immersed in the social environment to be studied, enabled the meticulous collection of data through interviews, observation and document analysis in a real situation.

From the literature, it can be deduced that both validity and reliability are crucial for conducting trustworthy research, yet these terms have to be reconceptualised within an interpretive paradigm where multiple realities exist. Reliability and validity are conceptualised as research that is conducted with neutrality, trustworthiness, and unbiasedness with a focus on the credibility and effort of the researcher through a reflexive practice.

CHAPTER 5 ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The main question that frames this study is: ***how do university executives meet the demand for legitimacy from internal and external stakeholders during such a controversial change process*?** The principal objectives of this study are fourfold and the following sub-questions are formulated: *(i) Which institutionalised practices triggered radical change at South African public universities? (ii) How do legitimacy demands on universities influence its ability to deal with radical change? (iii) How do change agents identify and reconsider rational myths during radical change? (iv) How do personal values and emotions of change agents with varying positions and levels of power within the university influence radical change?*

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part of the chapter focuses on the thematic analysis of the data. Part two of the chapter proceeds with a dynamic discourse metaphor analysis. The final part of the chapter summarises the insights drawn from this triangular approach involving multiple theories, several methods of data collection as well as multiple methods of data analysis.

5.1 Findings of thematic data analysis

This section commences with a description of the data analysis process. It then proceeds with the data structures that were compiled by following established techniques for qualitative data analysis through an iterative process.

To become familiar with the data and to identify broad themes the researcher critically read through the scribed interviews, observation notes, and documents. Possible broad themes were identified. Subsequently, excel worksheets were created for the broad themes and paragraphs related to the broad themes were grouped onto the different worksheets. This exercise led to a broad classification of the themes. Although the Excel sheets did not further contribute to the findings, it provided a useful starting point for the coding of the data by identifying the broad themes and it assisted with critical reading. The data items were imported into NVivo, software used for qualitative data analysis. Due to a large amount of text, initial word frequency queries did not assist in refining the broad identified themes. It did, however, reveal a significant focus on the factors that led to the radical change process. The word cloud is presented in figure 5.1.

Figure 5-1 Word cloud for terms associated with factors that triggered the radical change

Broad themes. In the first step of the analysis, all the data, entered as text files into NVivo, were coded based on the broad themes. This was an iterative process and more nodes were added when new themes emerged. Such descriptions included, amongst several others, references to the national environment, explanations of national and campus events that led to the period of radical change, factors that impacted institutional legitimacy and the value statements of participants. Observations of personal leadership as well as the leadership of others during this period revealed both appreciation as well as condemning certain behaviour. The broad themes that emerged were triangulated with the data obtained from the various sources. Reading and rereading of transcripts took place during this process. The data were subsequently coded and this resulted in 634 coded nodes.

First order categories. The second step involved the clustering of the broad themes into higher-order themes or first-level categories. This was a recursive process and some of the first-order descriptions had to be moved and re-clustered. One such example is the recurrent descriptions of incidents of breaking the law. The decision as to whether this should be clustered under the aggregated dimension of environmental institutionalisation or whether it rather affirms or negates notions of legitimacy had to be decided by rereading the surrounding text and the context provided by the research participants. I deemed it important to retain the language used by participants and the coded texts were constantly compared with the literature to assist with the identification of conceptual patterns. The themes were further refined through triangulation

of the data obtained from observations, interviews, and documents. This led to the formulation of first-order categories. Examples of first-order categories include “legitimate expectations”, “social inequality” and “disillusionment after two decades of democracy”.

Second order themes. The next step in the analysis involved a recursive process of looking for links amongst the first-order categories so that these categories can be collapsed into distinct second-order conceptual themes. For example, the expectation of free education, economic growth, and the prospect of employment after graduation can all be clustered as ‘disillusion and social inequality’. The outcome of this step of the analysis produced thirteen higher-order themes as alluded to in the next section.

Aggregated dimensions. The final step in this part of the analysis was to organise the second-order themes into overarching theoretical dimensions. This involved the integration of the literature with the findings to identify the aggregate theoretical dimensions to also provide answers to the research questions and provide the aggregated dimension for the enhancement of sense-making. The three dimensions are (i) the frustrating environmental institutionalisation, (ii) involuntary sweeping change, and (iii) institutional legitimacy under scrutiny.

5.1.1 Frustrating environmental institutionalisation

The first identified aggregated dimension is the *frustrating environmental institutionalisation.* Based on the data analysis the events that triggered the radical change can be classified under the following second-order themes: (i) disillusion and social inequality (ii) subverted national environment (iii) escalating trends in the South African (SA) higher education and (iv) questioned university functioning. This data structure is summarised in figure 5.2.

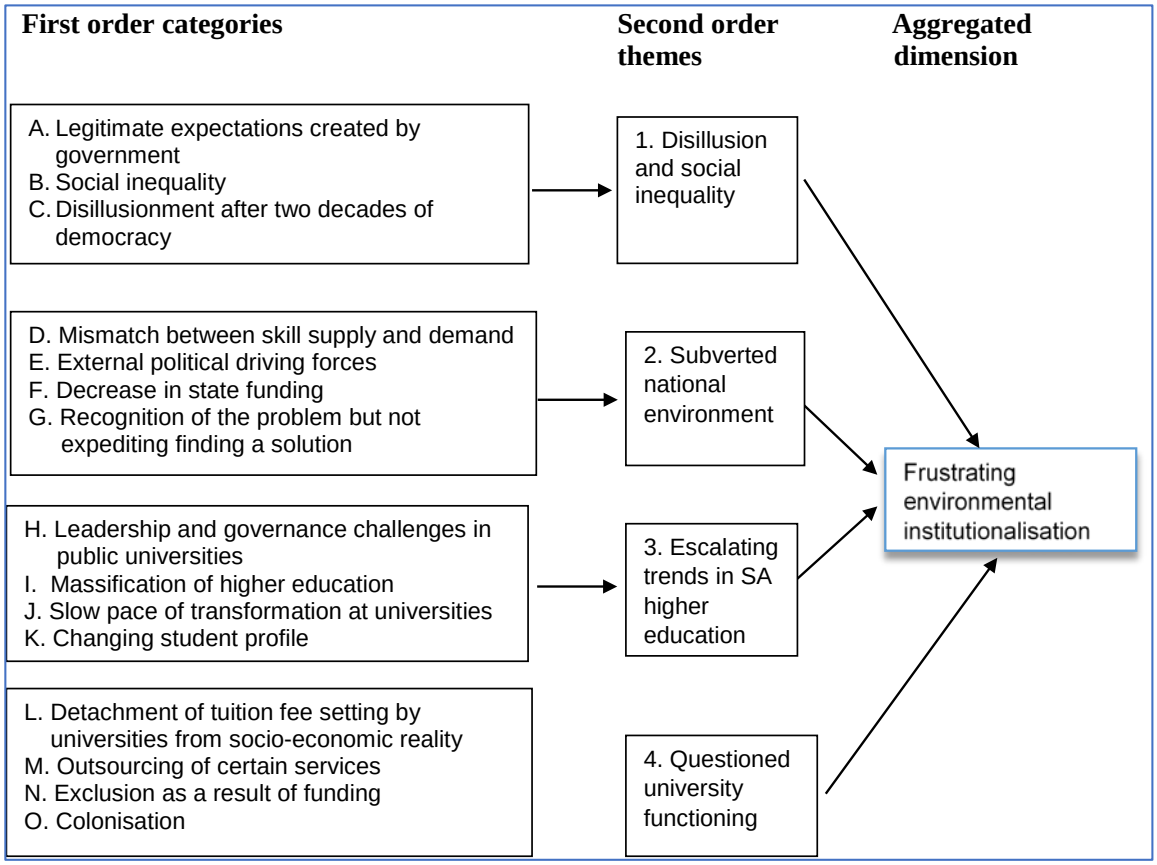


Figure 5-2 Data structure for aggregated dimension: frustrating environmental institutionalisation

The following supportive statements were provided by participants as summarised in Table 5.1

Second-Order Themes	Representative data
A. Legitimate expectations created by government	A1. "Our democratic government's commitment is free higher education for the poor, with reasonable measures to assist the 'missing middle' while those who can afford to pay – the rich and the well-off – must pay" (Document D4). A2. "The crisp legal issue is whether, after 22 years of democracy, the stance of the minister reflects less than reasonable measures to make further education progressively available and accessible" (Document D4).). A3. "The goal was there and there were expectations" (Executive Director A). A4. "Unfortunately, he (minister) created expectations" (Director C).
B. Social inequality	B1. "Given the aforementioned progress, principles and work, I am of the view that there is absolutely no need for any, in particular, disruptive student protests. It could otherwise be concluded that some of the small student groupings that persistently seek to achieve disruption and destruction of learning progress are now acting like hired agents of the bourgeoisie who want the state to pay for the rich" (Document D4). B2. "The perennial challenges of poverty, inequality and unemployment in SA" (Document 15) B3. "But in a country where many people still don't have access to electricity or drinkable water there are many competing priorities" (Document D11).

Second-Order Themes	Representative data
C. Disillusionment after two decades of democracy	C1. "The call for free higher education for all is not inherently a revolutionary call – it could as well be a reactionary stance that is inconsiderate of the objective conditions, in particular, to social relations of class inequality that we are yet to and must eliminate" (Document D4). C3. "Some of it was just a sense of frustration. And the university became a fulcrum for a whole series of activists from across the country" (Document D11). C4. "#FeesMustFall protests were about far more than fees" (Deputy Vice-chancellor D) C5. "The role of universities as place-based agents of development and change in their neighbourhoods and regionally has generally not been promoted" (Document D12) C6. "Some believed in the notion that getting a university qualification would get you out of poverty" (Vice-chancellor D) C7. "What is happening in our higher education system reflects what is happening in our society more broadly. There is a sense of disenchantment, a sense of discontent with what is happening" (Vice-chancellor K).
D. Mismatch between skill supply and demand	D1. "The training and knowledge-production functions of universities, which foster new employment by creating a more highly-skilled workforce. The importance of these functions and the difficulties of fulfilling them" (Document D16). D2. "Higher education system is under pressure to produce graduates who can meet the demands of a rapidly-changing modern world in the throes of a fourth industrial revolution" (Document D19).
E. External political driving forces	E1. "The political class have little understanding or experience of the contributions that universities make to their societies" (Document D2). E2. "When it [protests] started we knew that our students had this copy mentality and even though they know that the majority of them would benefit, they knew that with the strike if they are not involved they would be labelled so they kind of joined just to make sure that they are politically correct" (Deputy Vice-chancellor B) E3. "Context of widespread poverty and ecological decay and a rise in nationalism globally" (Document D19).
F. Decrease in state funding	F1. "If the impact of substantial increase in student enrolments is taken into consideration, there was actually a decrease in the per capita full-time equivalent student allocation" (Executive Director A). F2. "That was the added problem that with the fees running high and with the ceiling on the amount of financial aid available, fewer and fewer students would be able to come to university" (Vice-chancellor D). F3. "The media said the minister publicly acknowledged that the state does not have money to fund free higher education. He also said he would like to see free higher education for the poor and the state will commit itself. What do you make of the mixed signals?" (Observation 1)
G. Recognition of the problem but not expediting finding a solution	G1." Meanwhile, the Presidential Higher Education and Training Commission is hard at work exploring a lasting solution" (Document D4). G2. "The political driving forces showed slow progress; whether legitimate or not, government was not seen as taking action fast enough. The problem of decreasing funding has been raised for more than a decade, yet a ministerial task team was only appointed after a year of instability at universities. Eventually the findings of the task team were not considered" (Deputy Vice-chancellor C).

Second-Order Themes	Representative data
H. Leadership and governance challenges in public universities	H1. “My personal feeling was that the president was sabotaging the country. I was disappointed” (Director C).
	H2. “I am not optimistic. We need strong leadership with influence inside and outside the university” (Executive Dean D)
	H3. “The risk that I see happening is that nobody wants to be academic managers anymore - there are just too much crap in the system and there is this whole line of political interference” (Director J)
	H4. “University managers were exposed to decisions they had no experience of, also because of an absence and lack of government engagement and leadership” (Director I)
	H5. “It is volatile space with a lot of challenges. There is a sense that institutions are collapsing due to financial mismanagement and poor governance” (Executive Director A)
I. Massification of higher education	I1. “Enrolments have almost doubled in 18 years yet the funding has not kept up, resulting in slow growth in the number of university lecturers, inadequate student accommodation, creaking university infrastructure and equipment shortages. The number of institutions that have recently been put under administration is an indication of the leadership and governance challenges” (Document D4)
	I2. “Massification of access introduced a new form of engagement from 1994” (Document D19)
J. Slow pace of transformation at universities	J1. “Students believed the pace of change in Africa was too slow” (Document D11)
	J1. “The majority of professors are white” (Vice-chancellor J)
	J2. “White privilege - now it become issues about perceptions of power. Students are storming white privileged institutions” (Executive Director B)
	J4. “I get a sense we have oversimplified the task. And we only do cosmetic changes” (Director I)
	J1. “The academic world can be an unfriendly space with entrenched practices, which are not university policies” (Vice-chancellor C)
K. Changing student profile	K1. “Remember the neighbourhood surrounding the university has deteriorated, so the dysfunctional environment is moving closer to the university” (Director I)
	K2. “The higher education landscape has changed to such an extent. But my understanding of this thing goes back to if you go back in history - schools were the best place you could be - schools were maintained. The environment was safe. Principles and policies were implemented. The results showed for itself. Then people began to leave the teaching professions, because of liberal policies coming into the education school system. Older generation of staff left; some took packages, other took early retirement. Then a new generation of young inexperienced teachers came in and the discipline in the school system is lacking. You could see stress picking up. I don’t have to tell you what the school system is now. And we get the learners from the schools in the surrounding areas” (Executive Dean A)
	K3. “Remember now in the new model the funding follows the students. So, my favourite quote from the African proverb is - when the music changes - so does the dance. I think HE is fundamentally a different space but I think people are still struggling to understand that - to understand that the dance has changed and what is now required of us” (Executive Dean D)
	K4. “Students are demanding things that have never been part of the mandate of a university. So, we have this changing student profile in terms of social class and

Second-Order Themes	Representative data
	economic background which poses an incredible challenge to which the university has to respond" (Vice-chancellor K)
L. Detachment of tuition fee setting by universities from socio-economic reality	L1. "I think that firstly the protests would never have happened had we not reached in the society a level of polarisation. I think that there is a political polarisation in the society largely born out of two things: the growth of inequality in the society and the polarisation that that engenders" (Vice-chancellor C).
M. Outsourcing of certain services	M1. "I formed a task team to look at insourcing of outsourced services" (Vice-chancellor H).
	M2. "What was a challenge for us was our security – because of the insourcing they were siding with the students" (Executive Dean D)
N. Exclusion as a result of funding	N1. "Structural violence that maintains the culture of exclusion at the university which students sought to expose" (Document D19)
	N2. "Processes that administratively result in discrimination on a racial basis" (Document D16)
	N3. "… because of working with hungry students and working with students who can't continue with their university studies because they don't have funds" (Dean of Students A)
	N4. "I understood that there was a core lot of people who really deserved funding fully. I understood that and I know there's a cohort of people that will benefit from that all race groups. You know, I want to expose the myth that it is only African students who are needy…" (Dean of Students A)
O. Colonisation	O1. "Through their architecture and the names of their buildings, they have forged a very particular cultural identity that shapes the university and creates for students, staff, indeed for the public, a particular place that carries meaning" (Document D14)
	O2. "They said: 'As a black student I can study at the University of Cape Town and never be taught by a black professor. I learn about philosophy but I am only exposed to philosophers from Europe. What about philosophers in Africa?' (Document D11)
	O3. "Institutional culture and practices, including issues of decolonisation, transformation, unjust discrimination" (Document D19)

Table 5-1 Representative data about environmental institutionalisation

5.1.1.1 Disillusion and social inequality

The findings demonstrate a clear sentiment that, in South Africa, with high levels of unemployment, education is viewed as an instrument through which the poor can achieve liberation from poverty, racism, classism, sexism, and patriarchy. As young adults coming to university for the first time, it is the first time for many of them to freely express themselves. Many participants acknowledged that a legitimate expectation has been created and that the seriousness of the looming crisis was underestimated.

There was a clear difference in opinion between participants as to whether the promises made in the Constitution were given sufficient attention. Whilst some were of the view that sufficient attention was being given to higher education funding, others agreed with the students who initiated the student protests. Universities deliver graduates but due to slow economic growth, many graduates are unemployed. Due to the poor performance of the basic school system, not enough students with Mathematics and Sciences enrol at universities in scarce skill areas; resulting in a mismatch between skill supply and demand. The high unemployment rate and social inequality fuelled the disappointment of students in the government. The frustration about the aforementioned as well as the seemingly slow response of government turned into anger and as an organ of state, universities became the outlet for many disillusioned students. Societal challenges influenced student behaviour and the fee protests became the instrument for voicing their frustrations. The call for radical change in higher education was not merely about tuition fees, but students and other stakeholders essentially started questioning the slow pace of transformation at universities.

5.1.1.2 Subverted national environment

A legitimate expectation has been created by the provisions made in the Constitution itself. Section 29(1)(b) of the Bill of Rights declares unequivocally that "*everyone has the right to further education … which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible.*" The question then becomes - how did these promises evolve to the point where it led to unplanned radical change, resulting in almost two years of violence and instability at public universities in South Africa? The findings reveal that this looming crisis was highlighted in engagements between vice-chancellors and the minister over several years, but, although progress was made, it was not fast enough and normative legitimacy came under scrutiny. This procrastination of systems is typical of highly institutionalised organisations (Scott, 2004; Taylor and Van Every, 2000).

5.1.1.3 Escalating trends in SA higher education

The perceived slow pace of transformation contributed to the unplanned radical change. The fact that the majority of professors are white, and the many traditions and practices that prevail at universities, led to students feeling alienated. The impression of an unwelcoming environment was exacerbated by the fact that management was seemingly aware of these challenges, but instead of acting on it, reverted to cosmetic changes. The change in the student demographic

profile brought with it diversity of language, culture, and religion, yet, the embracing of these diverse cultures did not seem to take place at all campuses.

5.1.1.4 Questioned university functioning

The change process raised two critical matters about higher education, namely, fee-free education and decolonised education. The first speaks to the issue of higher education as an engine for social mobility and massification and the widening of access. The latter speaks to a perception of the alienation of students from their learning experiences and the continuation of a colonised education system that excludes African cultures. The values of a university are also expressed through the symbols, naming of buildings and traditions on campuses. Although cosmetic changes were done, the traditions, symbols and institutionalised practices prevailed. The need for a decolonised curricula and student experience were part of the student demands.

Focusing on the institutionalisation of the guiding principle of setting tuition fees, a clear detachment of the university budgeting process and the community's socio-economic conditions was observed. Universities asserted that the Higher Education Price Index (HEPI) is higher than the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and therewith justified the annual increase in tuition fees, although being cognisant of the fact that high tuition fees prohibit access for a large portion of the population. Stakeholders and students perceived the administrative process of the university as discriminatory on a racial basis. Participants also referred to incidents where students were admitted to universities, yet the funding did not support the student holistically, meaning the fees might be paid but the student was still hungry in class. The dire need for a funding solution for poor and middle-class students became pertinent.

5.1.2 Involuntary sweeping change

The next aggregated dimension is the *involuntary sweeping change* that took place, summarised in figure 5.3. The second-order themes are (i) the conflicting demands (ii) the deconstruction of institutional order, (iii) hostile situations, (iv) a fundamental rethink of institutional culture and (v) creative innovation. These findings will be further elucidated and representative data is captured in table 5.2.

The stress associated with decision-making was more than what one would expect from steering a change process due to the volatility of the situation, the unpreparedness of senior managers to

deal with this situation and the potential risks associated with the violent student protests. The volatile nature of the change process made it extremely difficult for university managers to focus on the core business.

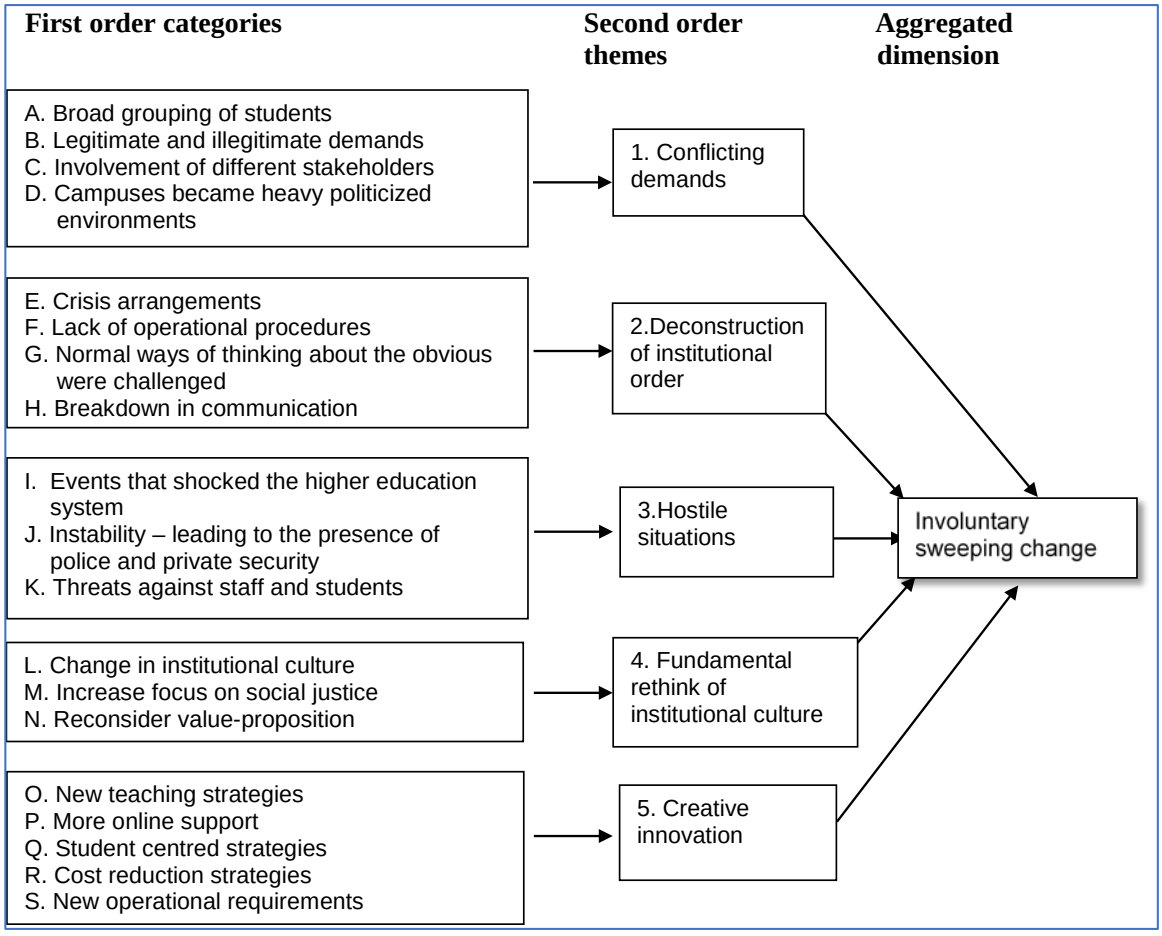


Figure 5-3 Data structure for aggregated dimension: involuntary sweeping change

Second-Order Themes	**Representative data**
A. Broad grouping of students	A1. "Some, even many, were not politically affiliated or ideologically driven but were sympathetic to the issue" (Vice-chancellor B) A2. "strategy of making demands and then, when concessions are made, making more demands until, as he says, the university can give no more, and then the university will bring on the security and the police, and that will then escalate and the aim is to change the government" (Vice-chancellor I) A3. "We really tried to engage with them but quickly realised they do not really want constructive solutions. The more we gave in to demands, the more, newer demands came" (Deputy Vice-chancellor C) A4. "They were not coming up with something that was never promised - because government made some promises, although but then at the same time, the problem with students was at the same time destroying the very thing that you want. The problem with our students, even with the community is destroying, destroying a crèche, a clinic

Second-Order Themes	**Representative data**
	because you want a tar road. It is barbaric; it is not something that should be done; but then - it seems like we are now allowing that behaviour as a country" (Deputy Vice-chancellor B)
B. Legitimate and illegitimate demands	B1. "It is the problem with some parts of the protests. People claim they are fighting a noble course, but the threats – the violence – the propensity to violence is completely unacceptable" (Vice-chancellor C) B2. "We had to give in on things we would not have agreed to in 'normal' conditions - it is in contradiction to what the norm is" (Director B) B3. "Call for free education got hijacked by political activists and opportunists" (Executive Director A) B4. "Because for them management was the people who are blocking them, and our view at the time and was that they are forcing you to make this a university fight and yet they should be fighting the government because there is really little understanding that fees is needed to make the budget balance" (Deputy Vice-Chancellor B)
C. Involvement of different stakeholders	C1. "It does not help to invest in free education if there is not jobs for graduates, so the things are not problems that the university should be able to solve" (Director I) C2. "The #FeesMustFall movement has a legitimate demand at its core and illegitimate thuggery on its periphery" (Document D4) C3. "… after the 0% was given there was a second demand came which was insourcing" (Vice-chancellor C)
D. Campuses became heavy politicised environments	D1. "It was a heavily politicised environment in which the academics found themselves. You know, I've never had to think and operate in a more politically conscious environment than I've had to in this period. One was not necessarily to look at students as students. You had to think of what is the force behind their actions" (Vice-chancellor E) D2. "With the strike the problem we have here, firstly, is that students are too politically inclined. We are governed by political parties" (Deputy Vice-Chancellor A)
E. Crisis arrangements	E1. "The only way we can resolve this is through a negotiated outcome. However, you are never going to get a negotiated outcome without a degree of stability at the university. Negotiation happen in a particular context" (Vice-chancellor C) E2. "I reorganised my senior team so that I could depend on one of his deputy vice-chancellors to handle the crisis negotiations. What that means is that I'm able to look after the campus and make sure the rest of the university keeps going. And that's certainly taken a lot of the stress off - meaning the immediate stress, the daily unpleasantness of being in a meeting where someone's confronting you or trying to humiliate you" (Vice-chancellor I) E3. "What happens now – because of the stretching of people – you simply cannot be everywhere – so you give attention to the most vulnerable place" (Executive Dean C)
F. Lack of operational procedures	F1. "No clarity was provided on the implementation, no operational things in place to make it happen. NSFAS didn't even know what was happening. It was a pity that it happened like that. It was in a way a good outcome of the protests but the way it played itself out made it so messy" (Executive Dean D) F2. "For one, it is chaotic, staff members had to work late hours, they had to put documentation together and it was really very unorganised" (Deputy Vice-Chancellor A) F3. "We were caught unprepared for a much larger number of students coming into university and returning than we had before" (Vice-chancellor I) F4. "Under the previous rules they had to finish in year n+2. Under the new rules they have to complete in year n+1. These students that already fail in their first year have

Second-Order Themes	**Representative data**
	very slim chance of completing the degree in time. We will have to strategise" (Director B) F5. "it is not done in a planned way and therefore we see many unintended consequences (Director D)
G. Normal ways of thinking about the obvious were challenged	G1. "These threats were real, so you feel the wrong call can cause the loss of a life." (Deputy Vice-chancellor C) G2. "What frightened me was the manner in which they had created a world of their own, and that again, here, you realise the power of the mind to create a world. It's a world which those people inhabited and no one else could inhabit it until they bought into it" (Vice-chancellor K) G3. "But what worries me is that there's almost sense of normality about the situation. There would be students protesting here in the square but classes would be going on with other students walking past the protestors, and staff walking past them, and there is almost an acceptance that this is the new normal" (Vice-chancellor L) G4. "It was chaos. No clarity. As much as you plan, issues come up very suddenly. Universities was in a state of flux. Nobody knows what was next (Executive Dean A)
H. Breakdown in communication	H1. "Meetings were obstructed, instead of debating and moving forward" (Vice-chancellor E) H2. "Inability to use social media communication in crisis situations whilst students succeeded with that" (Document D10) H3. "White older female staff members were really shocked and scared and perceived the protest actions and events on social media as disrespectful, unlawful and felt student should be disciplined and suspended" (Deputy Vice-chancellor C) H3. "Staff felt traumatised. We have to create an environment where management and students meet regularly" (Executive Director B) H4. "Our student leaders were not truthful with us - we had a meeting the very first day where we agreed to a stable academic environment where academic business can continue whilst we have meeting to try and find an agreeable way forward. The very next day they closed the gates by burning tyres, preventing people to come in. They wrote very disrespectful things on social media" (Deputy Vice-chancellor C) H5. "the key thing for me is to hold my team together, and to make sure that the people who are very angry feel that they are being listened to and being heard, even if they don't feel the decisions we are taking are the right ones" (Document D11)
I. Events that shocked the higher education System	I1. "It was something we were so totally not prepared for. It shocked the system" (Executive Dean D) I2 I did not see it coming - not in the magnitude that we saw it. I was totally shocked (Dean of Students A) I3. "I think it was a shock for the entire country –in fact even for people in the government and in ANC itself…the president sometimes will make announcements that were unexpected" (Director J) I4. "Suddenly things spiralled out of control" (Executive Dean B) I5. "Hell Broke loose" (Director A)
J. Instability – leading to the presence of police and private security	J1. "… this is clearly not sustainable. The only reason that we have stability is because we have private security and strong police presence and clearly this is not what a university should be doing" (Vice-chancellor C) J2. "I mean students spoke for themselves. Nobody spoke for the universities. Nobody spoke for the Vice-chancellors about accountability … nobody stood up for them and

Second-Order Themes	**Representative data**
	said, 'This is what their role is.' It doesn't matter whether I like free education or not, I have to make sure that students can graduate, that professional exams can be written, that the university is a safe space, that the library doesn't burn. So there was no room to say that. If you say that you were lashed out, you were not sympathetic, you called security. So the VCs were criticised all along the way" (Deputy Vice-chancellor D)
K. Threats against staff and students	K1. "There was an amazing amount of hostility and disrespect" (Vice-chancellor L) K2. "Great fear and not knowing what to expect" (Deputy Vice-Chancellor A) K3. "Many staff members were threatened. In all kind of subtle and crude ways – by the damage the police and security came in – the damage had been done and we recognised it – it was a huge damage" (Vice-chancellor C) K4. "A lot of colleagues left the university emotionally scarred" (Director D)
L. Change in institutional culture	L1. "Changing the institutional culture. Making sure we have a more diverse staff body, because that will lead to a change in institutional culture. The most important is understanding our students. University is place where academic business must be prioritised recognising that the need for social justice projects should also take place" (Deputy Vice-Chancellor A) L2. "We will now have to develop a very good strategy to manage this process so that universities remain competitive in terms of its academic performance. They (new cohort of students) did not have to fight to be here … it was not difficult to get in" (Director B) L3. "… it's obviously about the culture of the place. Changes of this nature does not happen overnight. You cannot change something that has happened for 40 years and students demand changes overnight" (Vice-chancellor A)
M. Increase focus on social justice	M1. "On an operational level we will have to rethink a number of models such as student accommodation and student support, since we are going to deal with more students from disadvantaged backgrounds" (Deputy Vice-chancellor C) M2. "The solution is not just additional funding. It's a fundamental rethink that is required" (Document D4)
N. Reconsider value-proposition	N1. "…. not only changed the normal enrolment patterns and resulted in a more complex process for managing enrolment targets, but also had an impact on the administration of registrations." (Dean A) N2. "Universities will see the consequences of this decision really in the coming three to five years from now" (Executive Dean B) N3. "Yes – look – you have to look at the whole student value chain, but we decided let's start at the beginning and if you talk about being radical – lets be radical at that point" (Executive Dean D) N4. "The solution to the challenges facing our public higher education system is not just additional funding. It's a fundamental rethink that is required. We need to reimagine our education from early childhood right across to university. What we have at the moment is not working, and we're busy putting a Band-Aid here and there and we are not confronting what we should be doing" (Vice-chancellor K) N5. "On a strategic level, I think universities will have to reconsider branding and reputation. The whole model has now changed from a university allocated student funding scheme, to a scheme where the funding follows the student" (Deputy Vice-chancellor C) N6. "We are in another competitive space with fee free higher education - so we have to look differently at the proposition we give to applicants" (Executive Dean D)
O. New teaching strategies	O1. "We made it through the protests – but the impact we felt the next year. The next year we realised the negative academic impact" (Director I)

Second-Order Themes	**Representative data**
	O2. "On the one hand when thinking about academics – I don't think they have quite come to grips with new type of student sitting in front of them and they are expecting another type of students in front of them" (Deputy Vice-chancellor C)
P. More online support	P1. "Actually, what we did- we implemented a different model of writing exam. We had to close the university" (Deputy Vice-Chancellor A)
	P2. "It also has a positive spin – it was the perfect storm in my world to promote hybrid learning. The level of maturity and dependency on technology has increased tremendously" (Director I)
	P3. "Out of the crisis, new initiatives were born, and we realise we have to be prepared for a time where we may not be able to have face to face classes with our students all the time. Many innovative teaching practices came to the front – some staff members actually became enthusiastic and would say – 'my goodness – yes – I never thought of teaching this way' etc" (Director I)
	P4. "We had to quickly develop an online system" (Deputy Vice-Chancellor A)
	P5. "We have changed from a residential to a distance online support environment" (Executive Dean D)
Q. Student centred strategies	Q1. "We have a huge shift to become student-centred. The student is now the major role player. To get through this student success challenge, there is now a focus on e-learning and the technology skills of the academics" (Director I)
	Q2. "What motivates me to think in a more student-centred way is we don't have a choice, and having said that, then I think we want to do it as best as we can, in the best, proper, transparent and correct way we can" (Dean A)
R. Cost reduction strategies	R1. "We have to think of other sources of income. Getting other resources of revenue and making better use of limiting resources. There is not more money coming from government" (Executive Director A)
	R2. "We are looking at cost reduction strategies in every area" (Executive Dean A)
	R3. "So, we should be growing more support staff members, but all vacant positions are frozen" (Executive Dean D)
S. New operational requirements	S1. "Our strategy has changed from a number one research intensive to number one student access and success and a student focus. Whether it is implementable is debatable" (Director I)
	S2. "Overnight we had to develop policies in terms on essential services" (Executive Dean D)
	S3. "But universities are not only knowledge institutions; they are social institutions with a range of roles. As such, they should build productive relationships with the public if they are to survive," (Document D19)
	S4. "The residences are a real mess-up. With the free higher education came an increase in enrolments" (Deputy Vice-chancellor A)

Table 5-2 Representative data about unplanned radical change

5.1.2.1 Conflicting demands

What distinguished the protest actions from any other protest experienced in higher education in South Africa was the fact that #FeesMustFall consisted of a broad group of students and it took place at historically white universities. The #FeesMustFall movement initially included a diverse group of students from different race- and gender groups that supported the call for free higher education. However, as the original peaceful protests changed into violent behaviour,

destroying infrastructure and as other agendas emerged, many students withdrew, whilst others saw it as an opportunity to put other demands on the table.

The radical change was unplanned and that added to the complexity of steering the change process. The environment was heavily politicised from the start and this hampered engagement between management and students. Whilst university managers were focusing on creating a stable environment where the core business could continue and, in principle, agreed with the call for free education for the poor, they could not put an immediate sustainable solution on the table, and students argued from an ideological perspective. Ideology and rationality could not meet. The national instability was used as a strategic tool to put pressure on the government.

Evidence of legitimate and illegitimate demands emerged. Certain student groupings were using demands to put pressure on universities, hoping that the pressure would ultimately influence the government. This tactic of students made it difficult for university leaders to respond to their demands. When demands were put on the table, attempts to reach negotiated outcomes were made. However, student leaders did not have a clear mandate and were not interested in campus-specific solutions that could bring stability to a campus. Where negotiated outcomes were reached, senior managers often found themselves being confronted with new demands the very next day. Furthermore, often students did not stick to resolutions agreed upon. Demands may be deemed legitimate by some stakeholders and illegitimate by others. However, whether demands are legitimate or not, is secondary to the fact that university leaders only have the mandate to deal with certain issues. Whilst students claimed to be fighting a noble cause, the propensity to commit violence displayed the opposite. In the attempt for students to justify the validity of the actions, management was portrayed as the agents who are blocking progress. To try and get stability on the campuses, negotiated agreements were reached that would not have been agreed to in ‘normal’ conditions. The norms associated with universities were contradicted. Participants were of the view that the call for free education got hijacked by political activists and opportunists.

The difficulty in establishing a platform to have meaningful engagements are also evident in the narratives of senior managers and crisis arrangements had to be made. The communication to internal as well as external stakeholders about these changes became crucial and was often

perceived as ineffective. The unpredictability and volatility of situations made it difficult for vice-chancellors to communicate.

5.1.2.2 Deconstruction of institutional order

In a very short time, campuses became heavy politicised environments and leaders had to operate in a politically conscious environment which is contrary to normal management of a university, also requiring a different skillset in terms of evaluating scenarios and dealing with volatile situations. As one participant commented: "*one was not necessarily to look at students as students. You had to think of what is the force behind their actions*" *(Vice-chancellor E)*.

A lack of operational procedures complicated administrative university processes. Crisis negotiations led to decisions being made under pressure without realising or contemplating the full consequences of implementing these decisions. As a result, staff had to work late hours, quickly develop policies and fast-track the implementation of certain decisions to keep universities functioning. Amidst these changes, staff felt uninformed, unprepared, traumatised, and demotivated.

Normal ways of thinking about the obvious were challenged. Following the deconstruction of the social order, a threatening environment emerged which turned so violent and unpredictable that personal safety of staff was at risk. When considering the personal values of participants, where safety was regarded by almost everybody as being most important in their environment, experiences of trauma, stress and fear can be better contextualised. Traditional roles associated with students and management were challenged as one participant indicated: "*they [students] had created a world of their own*" *(Vice-chancellor K)*.

A breakdown in communication occurred. Firstly, meetings were obstructed and that reduced opportunities for productive negotiations. Secondly, officials did not seem to use social media communication in crises whilst students made extensive use of social media. The absence of clear communication exacerbated negative feelings during the change period. Thirdly the breakdown in communication became evident through conflicting messages from senior managers and students who attended the same meeting, or the fact that resolutions taken during a meeting, were not honoured by student leaders. Senior leaders acknowledged the importance of communication in holding teams together.

5.1.2.3 Hostile situations

The events shocked the higher education system. The construction of identity and in particular the strengthening of autonomy has been a principal motto of most universities (see 3.4.4.1). Furthermore, as Lepsius (2017) stated, the overarching focus at universities is based on science and as such science symbolises methodological conventions in solving problems and finding solutions (see 2.5). It was the complete overhaul of this rational myth that shocked the system. The normal order of negotiated outcomes in a structured manner could not take place. The inability to have meaningful negotiations resulted in crisis negotiations that were associated with emotional exhaustion and high levels of stress.

Different stakeholders were involved in this change process. The multiplicity, complexity, and nature of the demands were such that different internal and external stakeholders had to collectively contribute to a solution. For example, the decision to close a campus immediately required a different approach from academics in terms of completing the curricula, conducting assessment, etc. Once again the disillusionment of poor socio-economic conditions led to more demands being put at the doorstep of universities. The crises faced by universities were exacerbated by the behaviour of surrounding communities. Examples are cited where a community would destroy a school since they are not happy with municipal service delivery. This same behaviour was displayed at universities. This finding reaffirms the research findings of Immergut (2005) that institutions do not determine social action but provide a context in which action takes place.

Good leadership is often associated with well-functioning institutions (Oelofse, 2007). Amidst the chaos, leadership felt they were left with no choice but to bring in private security and police. This was meant to bring about stability and also reaffirm leadership. The presence of these security services, however, had other unintended consequences that will be discussed under legitimacy (see 5.1.4). The hostility, uncertainty, and fear prevailed. Staff members were threatened, meetings were obstructed and although universities could function, it was not a '*natural environment*'.

5.1.2.4 Fundamental rethink of institutional culture

A fundamental rethink of institutional culture stems from the realisation that the new profile of students and a more diverse staff body bring new cultures to the universities. In accordance with the increased commitment of universities to social justice, one of the important considerations is to provide appropriate student support and relevant teaching and learning strategies. A changed institutional culture is essential to accommodate students from diverse backgrounds so that a university is a welcoming place and a place where equity of access is matched with equity of success.

5.1.2.5 Creative innovation

The impact of the unplanned change led to several other critical changes. Some changes required new operational procedures, whilst other changes have long term implications and required new strategic plans with a refocus of institutional priorities. Several participants acknowledged the reality of long-term implications yet to be explored and that new needs still emerge and cannot necessarily be predicted. The crisis forced academics to think differently about contact teaching classes and it was the perfect storm in the teaching environment to promote hybrid learning. As a result, the level of maturity and dependence on technology has increased tremendously. This innovation caused excitement as it presented positive things to focus on. One participant summarised it as: "*We have changed from a residential to a distance online support environment*" *(Executive Dean D).*

In the preceding dispensation, funding was allocated to universities and could then be apportioned to students. The offering of free higher education introduced a new era where funding follows the students. The recruitment of students, processing of applications, monitoring of enrolment plans, the provision of student support and the development of alternative models for student accommodation, are all affected business processes. One participant commented: "*the solution is not just additional funding. It's a fundamental rethink that is required" (Vice-chancellor K)*. Another participant acknowledged that the whole student value chain has to be reconsidered.

Free education does not mean more money for the higher education system. Furthermore, the sustainability of the current implementation of free higher education is questioned by many. The non-payment of outstanding debt was one of the unintended consequences resulting from the

free education announcement. Henceforth universities have to reconsider their financial planning strategies. Getting other sources of revenue and optimising the use of current resources were put forward as future strategies. Some senior managers are looking at cost reduction strategies, whilst all vacant positions are frozen at some other institutions.

From the aforementioned it is clear that the introduction of free higher education was unplanned and radical and happened on several levels simultaneously – both national and institutional. The normal processes followed during change and a proper change management process could not be followed. In an attempt to further understand the complexity of the process the legitimacy demands that came under scrutiny during this process are further analysed in the next section.

5.1.3 Institutional legitimacy under scrutiny

The third aggregated dimension deals with institutional legitimacy that came under scrutiny. The data structure is summarised in figure 5.4. The second-order themes are (i) the loss of normative legitimacy; (ii) susceptible empirical legitimacy; (iii) wounded leadership; (iv) weakened moral legitimacy (v) competing pragmatic legitimacy, and (vi) dynamic influences on sense-making. These findings will be explained below and representative data is captured in tables 5.3 to 5.8.

The impact of unplanned radical change on institutional legitimacy emerged as a theme. Different types of legitimacy were affirmed or negated during this process: normative legitimacy, empirical legitimacy, moral legitimacy, leadership legitimacy, and pragmatic legitimacy. It also became evident that cultural sensitivity, generational differences, the inner conflict experienced by social actors and the prolonged uncertainty were factors that contributed to perceptions surrounding legitimacy.

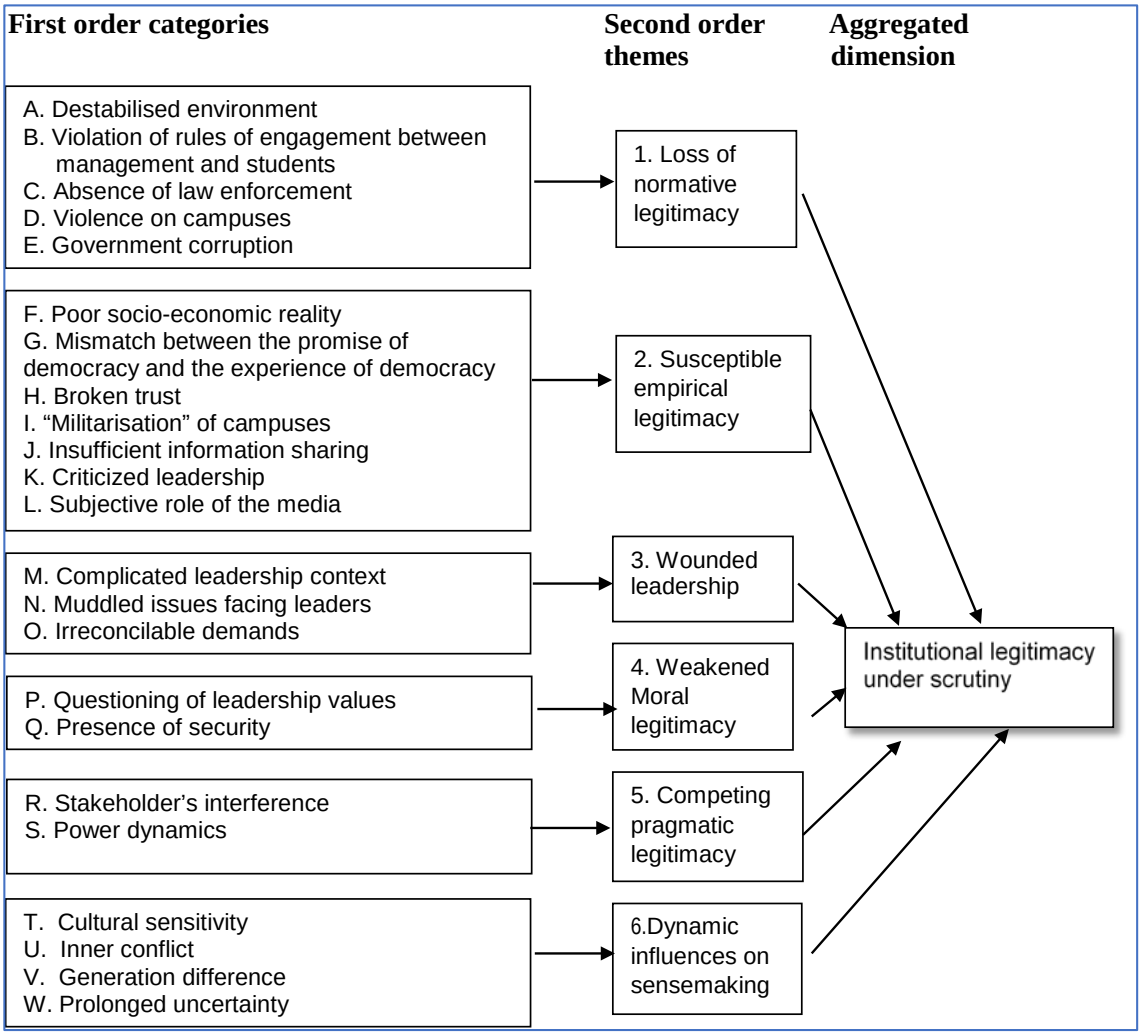


Figure 5-4 Data structure for aggregated dimension: institutional legitimacy under scrutiny

Second-order themes	**Representative data**
A. Destabilised environment	A1 "…. at least implicitly, the lack of political leadership on the part of the state. This is still true despite the initial valiant attempts at consultation by the Department of Higher Education and Training" (Director I) A2. "Well if one looks at local government level – they are on a downward spiral and I could experience poor service delivery" (Executive Director B) A3. "Once it announced the fee recommendations and the protests erupted across the higher education system, the DHET effectively retreated, leaving the universities to fend for themselves" (Deputy Vice-Chancellor C) A4. "…but then the police did not really know what to do – it became quite violent- The police were not sure what to do - what they needed to do" (Executive Dean D) A5. "People don't want to take VC (Vice-chancellor) and DVC (Deputy Vice-chancellor) position unless it is a stable environment. When they take these positions - they only last one or two years. They are lucky of they survive one term. The environment has become so immature in terms of the demands of what student want" (Executive Dean A)

Second-order themes	**Representative data**
B. Violation of rules of engagement between management and students	B1. “it became very clear that the way in which vice-chancellors had been set up and projected as 'the other', that is not who we are” (Vice-chancellor F) B2. “We would have a meeting with the student council and an hour later they would act as if the meeting never happened. A sense of not being in control - We felt we were not in control” (Director J) B3. “Our understanding of student governance through the SRC was reasonably stable and the order was accepted - at least in terms of its anatomical features, its make-up, so to speak. I didn't hear many voices questioning the very fundamental make-up of that system” (Vice-chancellor F)
C. Absence of law enforcement	C1. “I think that added to the trauma of staff - seeing that actually the law is not uphold and those very same students are back in the class” (Executive Dean B) C2. “I will label it as basically the tragedy of 2016. In the whole national system – you cannot show me one student that was active in this chaos in this whole sector who is sitting in jail today – So this is a symptom of the lack of upholding the law and the lowering standards of imposing law and order “ (Director I)
D. Violence on campuses	D1. “I feel angry and like I was treated unfair- even without respect” (Director C) D2. “From that moment I was so scared that I went straight to my car and just drove without looking back” (Director A) D3. “I felt humiliated at being treated like I have no say – you must just do” (Director C) D4. “… I was in the middle of them another trying moment for the first time the Stunt granite was activated next to me, the sound was too much. My ears were even blocked from the sound of the granite and it was thrown next to me. At that time, I was with the students trying to address them by asking them not to be violent” (Director A)
E. Government corruption	E1. “the future of poorer students is being stolen by the state due to the prevalence of corruption in SA” (Document D4) E2. “I will say sad - not sad that higher education is free, but sad that our country has deteriorated to such a state where we will have a president that is so self-centred that he will put the future of universities at risk by what he had done” (Deputy Vice-chancellor C)

Table 5-3 Representative data about loss of normative legitimacy

5.1.3.1 Loss of normative legitimacy

The first realisation coming from the narrative was that radical change erupts in chaos the minute environmental stability is compromised. The chaos was exacerbated by the fact that “*rules of engagement*” accepted under stable conditions were violated.

The second realisation was that upholding the law is a prerequisite for the effective functioning of a parastatal institution. The absence of law enforcement forced senior managers to take decisions outside their area of expertise and also treading on a terrain that was not seen as part of the core business. In an attempt to maintain legitimacy, exactly the opposite happened. The bringing of private security onto campuses, which are associated with open spaces, were seen

as compromising the very notion of universities and henceforth negating the legitimacy of a university as a public institution. Treading on the terrain of law enforcement resulted in a loss of legitimacy.

The uncertainty surrounding the implementation of the free education decision and the continued instability also negated the legitimacy of universities. Without any quantitative evidence, reputation had been damaged. Failure to assure staff that the quality of the institution would not suffer in the long-term, led to low staff morale.

The failure to condemn violence and related behaviours of spectacle undermined normative legitimacy. It also became clear that the power of environmental legitimacy supersedes the power of institutional legitimacy. A summary of the key factors that influenced normative legitimacy during this change period is illustrated with a concept diagram in figure 5.5.

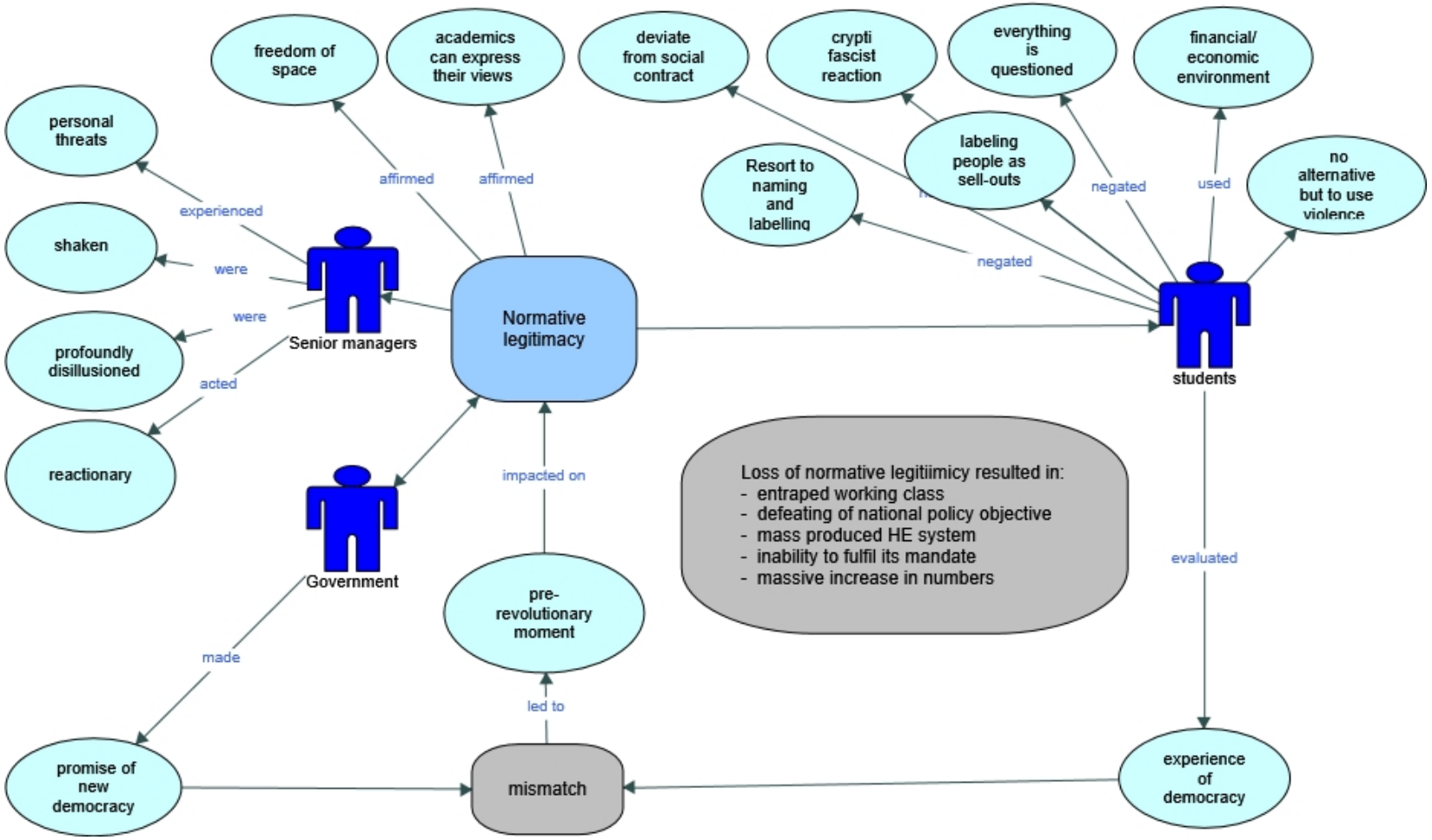


Figure 5-5 Loss of normative legitimacy

5.1.3.2 Susceptible empirical legitimacy

Empirical legitimacy is not based on expertise or morality, but rather on perception (Bitektine, 2011). For example, if 90% of a country's population believes that its government institutions are legitimate, then it has a high degree of empirical legitimacy. Empirical legitimacy is influenced by all stakeholders as it is determined by the perceptions as to whether the normative measures are indeed adhered to. Two contradictory issues stood out during this data analysis: firstly, the promise of the new democracy and the ideals expressed in the Constitution (see 3.1) versus, secondly, the current poor socio-economic reality.

The deterioration of the economy led to a disappointment in the social justice promises made by the national government. Thus, many parents and students, trapped in poverty, viewed the call for free education as a call for social justice. For them a university symbolises hope and a way of breaking the cycle of poverty. Due to the poor socio-economic realities and disillusionment of society, public universities were accused of becoming institutions that contribute to the reproduction of capitalism (see 3.1.2).

Second-order themes	**Representative data**
F. Poor socio-economic reality	F1. “Dissatisfaction about economic disempowerment and not the economic growth they expected and that was promised” (Executive Dean B) F2. “And this is where the narrative comes from which says that the university is part of the reproduction of capitalism in South Africa " (Vice-chancellor G) F3. “But for this country, remembering because of inequality and poverty it lifts it up from parents. If - at least - my child has an opportunity to break the cycle of poverty - that is a social justice matter” (Executive Director B)
G. Mismatch between the promise of democracy and the experience of democracy	G1. "This whole situation is very deep-rooted in the sense that there's a lot of dissatisfaction since 1994. There was a lot of excitement [then] and now a lot of anger” (Vice-chancellor H) G2. “mismatch. then, between the promise of democracy and the experience of democracy, and this annual escalation in the numbers of those who have little hope and for whom social and economic opportunity is simply not there” (Vice-chancellor G) G3. “A whole new context came to the front. More and I more I saw the student protest not being about fees, but being about something much bigger in the society, dissatisfaction with leaders, dissatisfaction with service delivery” (Executive Dean B) G4. “… the psyche of this dissatisfaction is underestimated from government's side” (Vice-chancellor H)
H. Broken trust	H1. I think the net effect of this [crisis] will be a slow but quite profound slide in the university's ability to support its mandate, thereby defeating the very policy objective of the government” (Vice-chancellor H)

Second-order themes	Representative data
	H2. "… it made me think of that point in history where you reach a kind of a pre-revolutionary moment, where everything is questioned. Not just the inner workings of something, but the entire order in which that is wrapped" (Vice-chancellor F)
	H3. "I think for the staff - the average staff there is still a lot of mistrust of management" (Executive Dean D)
	H4. "There is definitely not trust amongst the colleagues. Definitely not, particularly senior people" (Dean of Students A)
	H5. "Trust was broken in the process and had to be rebuilt. You thought you knew people but is was not the case" (Director J)
I. "Militarisation" of campuses	I1. "we will get through it; universities are strong and most universities are strong institutions. They have long histories. We go through crisis and we'll get through it on the other end. It will take us some time to recover because I think damage has been done, particularly to reputation globally" (Vice-chancellor I)
	I2. "Where is was an open public environment or space – it became a closed jail where security is everything. Security has been listed as our number one risk" (Director I)
	I3. "South African universities face a crisis of public confidence" (Document D19)
J. Insufficient information sharing	J1. "I think that all of us default to a kind of financial or economics argument to explain the crisis" (Vice-chancellor G)
	J2. "So in some cases we felt that if you are not there, you can't understand it" (Deputy Vice-chancellor D)
	J3. "But what really disappointed me was that they went afterwards and put up a 'smokescreen' where they had a referendum, whilst they have actually already decided what to do" (Executive Dean B)
	J4. "They are disappointed in management. They felt management cared more about students than about staff" (Director J)
	J5. "when you have an office that should be at the front of things and they don't know what to do - then you lose the trust of staff" (Executive Director B)
K. Criticised leadership	K1. "Our VC saw that he is not going to win this fight so he gave in to something that was not necessarily the right thing". "That is what I mean when I say wounded leadership - They lose objectivity" (Executive Dean B)
	K2. "Our VC had the support of senate to act and he didn't. Staff felt they were let down by leadership" (Executive Dean B)
	K3. "And I think to a large extent he got it right. He got people to talk" (Executive Dean D)
	K4. "He could not face the challenge to listen and maybe accept some criticism" (Executive Dean B)
	K5. "university managers were exposed to decisions they had no experience of, also because of an absence and lack of government engagement and leadership" (Director I)
	K6. "There has to be some sense of cohesion within the university the university has to build morale to get people to feel part of the institution and get everyone to all move in the same direction because I think a lot of people feel it's just a job for me" (Dean of Students)
	K7. "I realised after that one meeting, you cannot look [planless] in front of your leaders. You have to be the one that says, 'We will get this campus open two days from tomorrow. We will save the academic year. We will negotiate with students.' You can't say, 'Listen, I don't know what to do.' It was just like they were all looking up to the head to keep the campus open" (Deputy Vice-chancellor D)

Second-order themes	Representative data
L. Subjective role of the media	L1. "So, the extent to which one gets involved in responding on blogs and on Twitter and Facebook, and whether you respond to the nonsense that gets put out, as an institution it feels like we should not. We were hoping that other individuals will present the counter view of the truth, but they're not, they don't, and so only one side gets put out" (Vice-chancellor I)
	L2. "There have been too many cases of journalists with conflicted interests, on the one hand serving as activists of the student protest movement and on the other parading as legitimate journalists" (Vice-chancellor C)
	L3. "I was sadly disappointed about the amount of negative news and the issues around violence. every time we are confronted with the same info. It tells us we are a society at war with ourselves, if you look at issues of violence it is symptomatic of the state's failure to protect its citizens" (Executive Director B)

Table 5-4 Representative data about susceptible empirical legitimacy

Trust plays a significant role in legitimacy judgements and the findings revealed distrust between management and staff and distrust between staff and students. Adding to this, the media not only influenced legitimacy judgements, but also perceptions about trust. Due to the national nature of the fee protests, perceptions were not based on a single institution. The distinction between dealing with local versus national issues became blurry. Decisions taken at a university impacted not only the university but also other universities. External stakeholders that did not have direct interactions with universities, relied on secondary information of what was happening at universities to form legitimacy judgements. Trust relations are based on the expectation that the actions of management capture the best interest of the other stakeholders and trust can be seen as the extent to which management meets expectations of staff, students and other stakeholders. The distrust in the management of universities was aggravated by the instability, disruption of classes and "militarisation" of campuses. The lack of trust led to the corrosion of public confidence.

The prolonged instability at universities was ascribed to a lack of decisive leadership. The mistrust in management led to the questioning of decisions taken by management. Trust in decision-making is closely linked to moral legitimacy as it relates to the trustworthiness of a change agent. The lines between the different forms of legitimacy can overlap as can the sources of legitimacy. The mistrust was exacerbated by the media. Prof Bawa, the head of Universities South Africa stated "*there was no defence of the higher education system at this time, "not from the private sector, not from industry, not from government, not from students and not from the communities either*" (USAF, 2019).

The need to make decisions under pressure with insufficient time to consider the multiplicity of intended and unintended consequences, led to the perception of poor decision-making. Where senior managers succeeded in providing a clear context or acted sincerely upon the advice of formal university structures, legitimacy seemed to be retained from a staff perspective. Not doing this resulted in a loss of legitimacy. It became clear that staff wanted to be heard. Many university leaders, amidst the crisis, neglected to listen to the voice of university staff.

Universities are not only knowledge institutions but social institutions with a range of roles. As elucidated in the literature review in Chapter 3, higher education offers both a private and a public benefit. To maintain this status, the importance of building productive relationships with internal and external stakeholders was also highlighted. The media played a pertinent role in defining and promoting the roles that universities can and should play (Glenn, 2016; Langa et al., 2017). However, senior managers were of the view that there was a lack of objectivity during the reporting process. The following quotes support this statement:

"Our voice in the media is muted" (Vice-chancellor K);

and

"So, you sit with journalists who associate more with the students, because they come from that system, than with university management. You could clearly see that in the media" (Deputy Vice-chancellor D)".

and

"They (vice-chancellors) were verbally attacked and verbally abused by students Which made it kind of difficult – they were almost neutralised by the student behaviour but they needed to provide direction. The media did not help much" (Executive Dean D).

The following concept diagram in figure 5.6 summarises the key factors that emerged regarding empirical legitimacy.

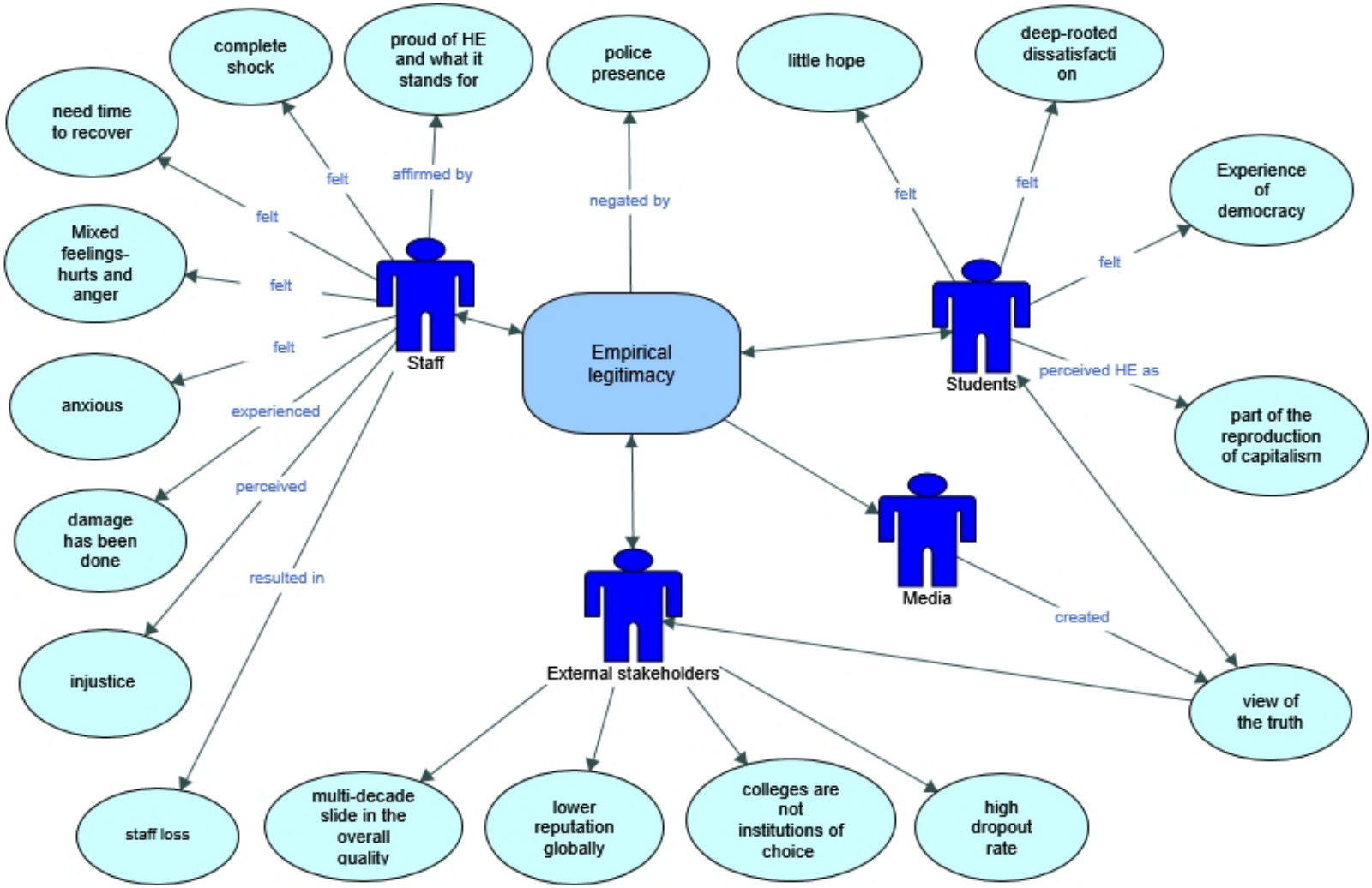


Figure 5-6 Susceptible empirical legitimacy

What became clear is that sense-making and sense-giving became important tools for senior managers to try and explain to stakeholders what was happening. To give effect to this, the role of the media in establishing empirical legitimacy is paramount. An example of negative media influence is indicated in figure 5.7, where adverse notions[1] of institutional legitimacy are articulated and another article[2] where the impact of the continued instability is emphasised.

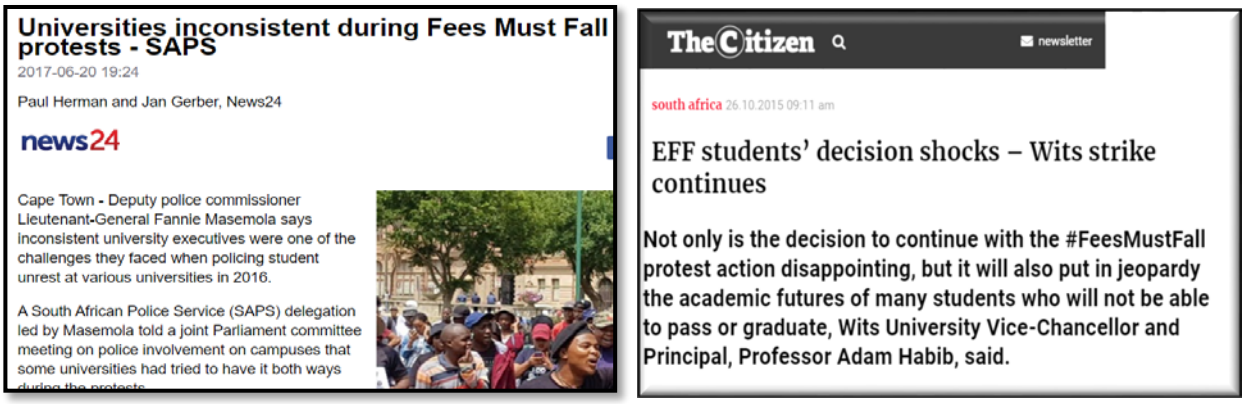


Figure 5-7 Newspaper articles criticising university decision-making and student protests

The multiplicity of information-sharing platforms, ranging from national broadcasts, printed media, social media as well as private Facebook and WhatsApp groups, resulted in aspirational or emulative violent behaviour from students and negated individual efforts of university managers to find meaningful solutions (Jansen, 2017(b); Siyabonga, 2015). Figure 5.8 contains[3] a screenshot where the Minister publicly condemns the behaviour of students, whilst a contradicting message[4] appeared in another newspaper, applauding students for the fee protests. Whilst students blamed the police presence for the increase in violence, there were clear indications party-aligned students legitimised violence as a means to get publicity and in the process gain political power. Two contradictory images of students emerged: first, students as

[1] Herman, P., Gerber, J. 2017. Universities inconsistent during Fees Must Fall protests – SAPS, News24, Available from: https://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/universities-inconsistent-during-fees-must-fall-protests-saps-20170620 [Accessed 25 November 2019].

[2] Tau, S. 2015. EFF students' decision shocks – Wits strike continues. *The Citizen*. Available from: https://citizen.co.za/news/south-africa/837620/eff-students-decision-shocks-wits-strike-continues/ [Accessed 30 November 2019].

[3] Hlekiso, C, 2018. Mail and Guardian. Available from: https://mg.co.za/article/2018-06-29-00-students-who-sacrificed-for-feesmustfall-deserve-recognitionan. Students who sacrificed for #FeesMustFall deserve recognition [Accessed 25 November 2019].

[4] Africa News agency, 2016. Nzimande condemns campus violence, Dailynews. Available from: https://www.iol.co.za/dailynews/news /nzimande-condemns-campus-violence-2070899 [Accessed 28 November 2019].

heroic troopers against socio-economic injustice and secondly, students as lawless, misbehaving brutes.

Figure 5-8 Condemning of student behaviour by the Minister

Figure 5-9 Positive media reporting on student protests

Figures 5.10 and 5.11 contain social media screenshots highlighting these contradictory student images. The screenshot below contains a message of a student leader that wanted to help financially needing student through the launch of a fundraising initiative.

To: NWU Vaal Student Community

From: NWU VAAL CSRC

Date: 26 October 2016

Subject: Statement from the Academics Officer

Greetings Fellow Students

in this historic year declared the year of Free Decolonized Quality Education in our lifetime, As a proverb has alluded that" The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential, Are the keys that will unlock the door to personal academic excellence

The office of the SRC Academic Officer has noted with concern the challenge that always haunt the children of the poor and working class which remain academic exclusion of our students from the system. The SRC will be combating this challenge through the progressive Education My Birth Right campaign therefore Students with Outstanding Fees are welcome to visit the SRC office B5D from 11am tomorrow.

Figure 5-10 Social media posting by student fighting a legitimate cause

In figure 5.11 two screenshots of a student leader are displayed.

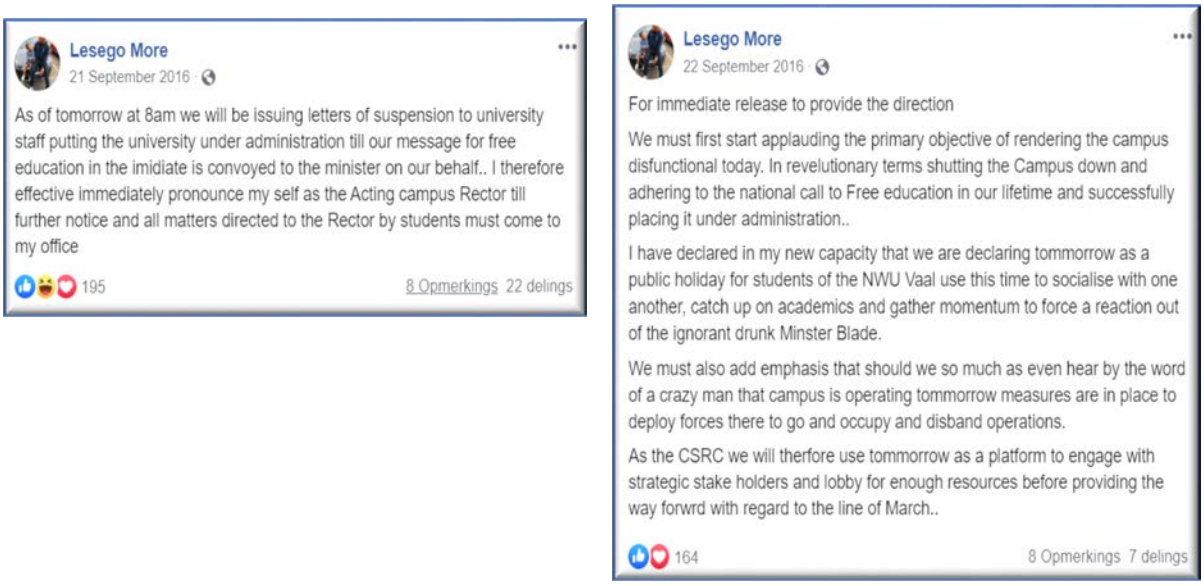


Figure 5-11 Extract from a student leader's Facebook, threatening and disregarding senior management

In these screenshots, clear disrespect for university leadership is displayed. Social media was successfully used by student leaders to mobilise students. Staff members withdrew when the protests became violent.

5.1.3.3 Wounded leadership

During this period of radical change, the normal business-as-usual operations could not proceed. Halting the academic business whilst trying to find solutions, infringed on leadership legitimacy

as well as on performance legitimacy. Qualitative supportive statements on wounded leadership are summarised in table 5.5.

Second-order themes	**Representative data**
M. Complicated leadership context	M1. "Sometimes they had to make a call - Sometimes we just had to go ahead and implement decisions" (Executive Dean D)
	M2. "You know at that time what was common sense was not common. Things did not make sense. The whole environment was polluted. Reasoning was not the order of the day" (Director J)
	M3. "if the country were less corrupt in its procurement system and general governance there would be more than enough resources to make it possible for fees to fall sufficiently for the state to be able to afford the cost of further education" (Document D4)
N. Muddled issues facing leaders	N1. "massive failure by management to recognise the problems it faced" (Document D19)
	N2. "Our VC saw that he is not going to win this fight so he gave in to something that was not necessarily the right thing. That is why is say - it was like a tail of two cities" (Executive Dean B)
	N3. "Don't create local issues. This is a national issue. The minute you start disciplinary action against students you are dealing with a different thing" (Deputy Vice-chancellor D)
	N4. "Staff felt bad. Especially because we had, what I would call wounded leadership - they lose objectivity. I could see how the vice-chancellor is crumbling under the pressure" (Executive Dean B)
	N5. "However, by the time I got to my sixth year as vice-chancellor, I was really tired. I'd just felt that I reached the point where I wasn't enjoying it anymore" (Vice-chancellor D)
	N6. "Yes, anxiety and stress escalated dramatically during that period, but one draws on one's peers, on one's partner" (Vice-chancellor G)
O. Irreconcilable demands	O1. "As a further rejection of the university's business-as-usual coping mechanism, the students regularly disrupted any organisation of the university and its management, whether meetings, public engagements or press conferences" (Document D9)
	O2. "#FeesMustFall was instigated by some other third force elements that wanted to get more political credibility" (Executive Dean A)

Table 5-5 Representative data about wounded leadership

Vice-chancellors had to take measures to protect the infrastructure and create an environment that would allow academic activities, including a looming final exam, to continue. These measures – obtaining court interdicts and calling the police – created a sense of anxiety and uncertainty on the university campuses. Students felt that the securitisation and militarisation of universities not only limit the rights of students to freedom of expression but undermine the legitimacy of universities as open spaces for students and staff to freely exchange and express ideas. The police presence, requested by university management, violated their space. The

deployment of police on campuses led to more violence, as police forces represent the state's symbolic power that students revolted against. University campuses are meant to be safe spaces.

Distrust about the legitimacy of the various stakeholders clouded the dialogues. Many examples are cited where groups of students would demand engagements with leadership, yet these students did not have a clear mandate or 'authority' to represent the students and as such their legitimacy was questioned. As violent country-wide protests erupted, blame was also shifted to the government which was perceived as illegitimate by students. In some instances, students presented demands as non-negotiable actions, leaving no room for discussions or negotiations. The involvement of external forces on the side of students was evident. Students would leave a meeting with a decision taken and then overturn the decision – this also raised a question about the legitimacy of student leaders. Due to the sensitive nature of racism in South Africa, some stakeholders believe that you can only speak of a certain experience if you belong to a certain race group. This stereotyping and silo-mentality of people in different cultural groups hindered leadership legitimacy.

The loss of normative and empirical legitimacy made it almost impossible to sustain leadership legitimacy. Funding problems were portrayed as a tension between vice-chancellors and students whilst the findings on the underlying reasons for the radical change indicated that many of the decisions fell outside the mandate of university managers. The key attributes that contribute to leadership legitimacy are indicated in figure 5.12.

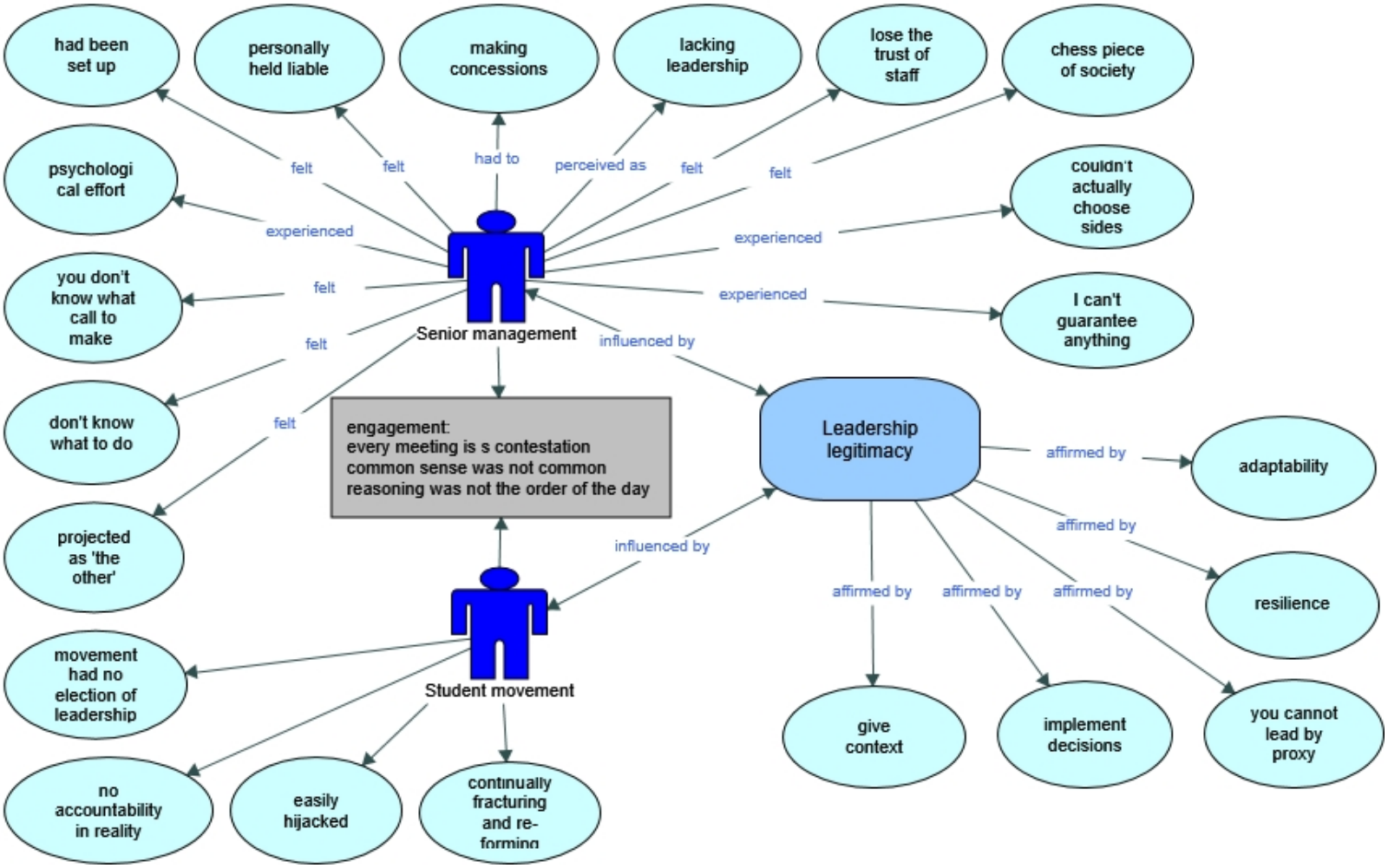


Figure 5-12 Wounded leadership

Dealing with student demands that are not static, contributed to mixed interpretations of events, leading to a breakdown in engagement. As university leaders tried to keep the academic project going, many students interpreted these attempts as a sign of disregard for the plight for free education. Subsequently, vice-chancellors were labelled as arrogant, brutal, and disengaged by protesting students. Simultaneously, vice-chancellors were confronted by angry parents, students and community members who wanted to complete the academic year. Furthermore, smaller groups of students emerged with their own sets of demands, disregarding established university processes on how to deal with these issues. The nett effect is that senior university managers became exhausted.

5.1.3.4 Weakened moral legitimacy

The moral legitimacy of senior leaders came under scrutiny during the radical change process.

Second-order themes	**Representative data**
P. Questioning of leadership values	P1. “Where is the justification in forcing a public university that is severely financially constrained to divert scarce resources to fight frivolous legal cases so that it can effectively fulfil its institutional mandate?” (Vice-chancellor E) P2. "Even if you feel you have a claim to something - stay true to your values. Don’t exchange values to be politic correct at the time” (Director I) P3. “there were many times when one compromised on principles” (Vice-chancellor I)
Q. Presence of security	Q1. “They (staff) wrote to me on a daily basis asking, 'Can you guarantee our safety?” and I had to say, 'No, I'm a vice-chancellor, that's all that I am. I take decisions that I hope will secure your safety but I can't guarantee anything:” (Vice-chancellor L) Q2. “We really tried not bring police and security onto campus but in the end, we had to” (Deputy Vice-chancellor C).

Table 5-6 Representative data about weakened moral legitimacy

Not only was the moral legitimacy of senior leaders questioned, but also the moral legitimacy of other stakeholders who presented their demands to university leaders. Without assumed moral legitimacy of all stakeholders in an engagement, the negotiated outcome is annulled. Factors affecting moral legitimacy are indicated in figure 5.13.

The act of bringing private security onto university premises continued to be questioned by many and raised issues about moral legitimacy. However, vice-chancellors justified this decision by re-iterating that - before communities recognise, that, until such time that violence is rejected, both in rhetoric and in practice, there is no moral legitimacy in the demand that a public institution should withdraw security.

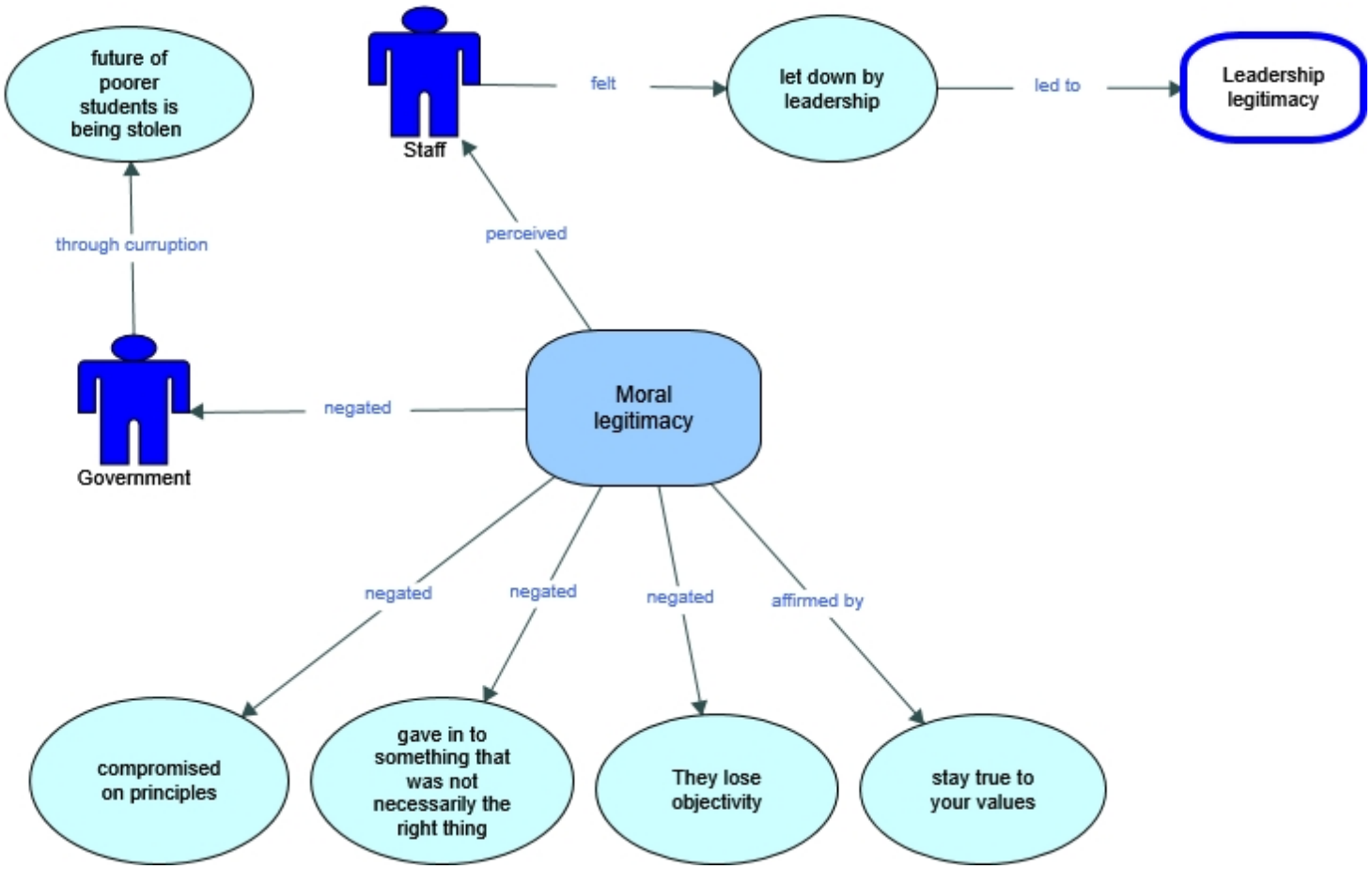


Figure 5-13 Weakened moral legitimacy

5.1.3.5 Competing pragmatic legitimacy

Different stakeholders have different expectations from universities. If a change process is successful, the rightful question that can be asked is – according to whose measurement or according to which criteria should the 'success' be evaluated? It seems that stakeholders have vastly different expectations from universities in terms of participation, the language of instruction, ranking and rating, research productivity, etc. The data that points towards pragmatic legitimacy is indicated in table 5.7.

Second-order themes	**Representative data**
R. Stakeholder's interference	R1. "This has become an opportunity for those wanting instability, and unfortunately we've played into their hands because of the crisis and because we lack leadership. Because of crisis, we're in a situation where we are forced into making concessions which normally, we would be opposed to" (Vice-chancellor D)
	R2. "So, because of the nebulous nature of this situation, anyone can demand anything in the name of #FeesMustFall. You can't ask them, 'Where's your leadership?' They would say, 'No, we're a movement, we don't have leaders" (Vice-chancellor L)
S. Power dynamics	S1. "So, the minute you speak to a group of students you give them legitimacy" (Deputy Vice-chancellor D)
	S2. "That tells us we should not be very simplistic in looking at the crisis in universities and analysing it separately from the business interests that benefit from this turmoil" (Vice-chancellor E)
	S3. "One was not necessarily to look at students as students. You had to think of what is the force behind their actions. So, for me it was more political and you really have to think in a very informed political way" (Vice-chancellor E)
	S4. "Because the question is - we will succeed by whose measurement or criteria? It seems as if what people want in terms of participation, language of instruction, ranking and rating, research productivity - different stakeholders have different expectations" (Deputy Vice-chancellor C)

Table 5-7 Representative data about competing pragmatic legitimacy

The more diverse the issues that are under pressure to change, the more complex sense-making and maintaining legitimacy became. What started as a protest for free education, quickly became a platform for many student demands, including free, decolonised education for all, the immediate clearance of historical debt, and the end of outsourcing of allied workers. Party-political power dynamics and battles for leadership positions also played off within the protesting movement. Legitimacy questions about the true motives and driving forces behind these movements emerged; to such an extent that reference was made to a 'third force' that had taken advantage and piggybacked on the student protests to cause chaos and heighten tension. A concept diagram of issues affecting pragmatic legitimacy is presented in figure 5.14.

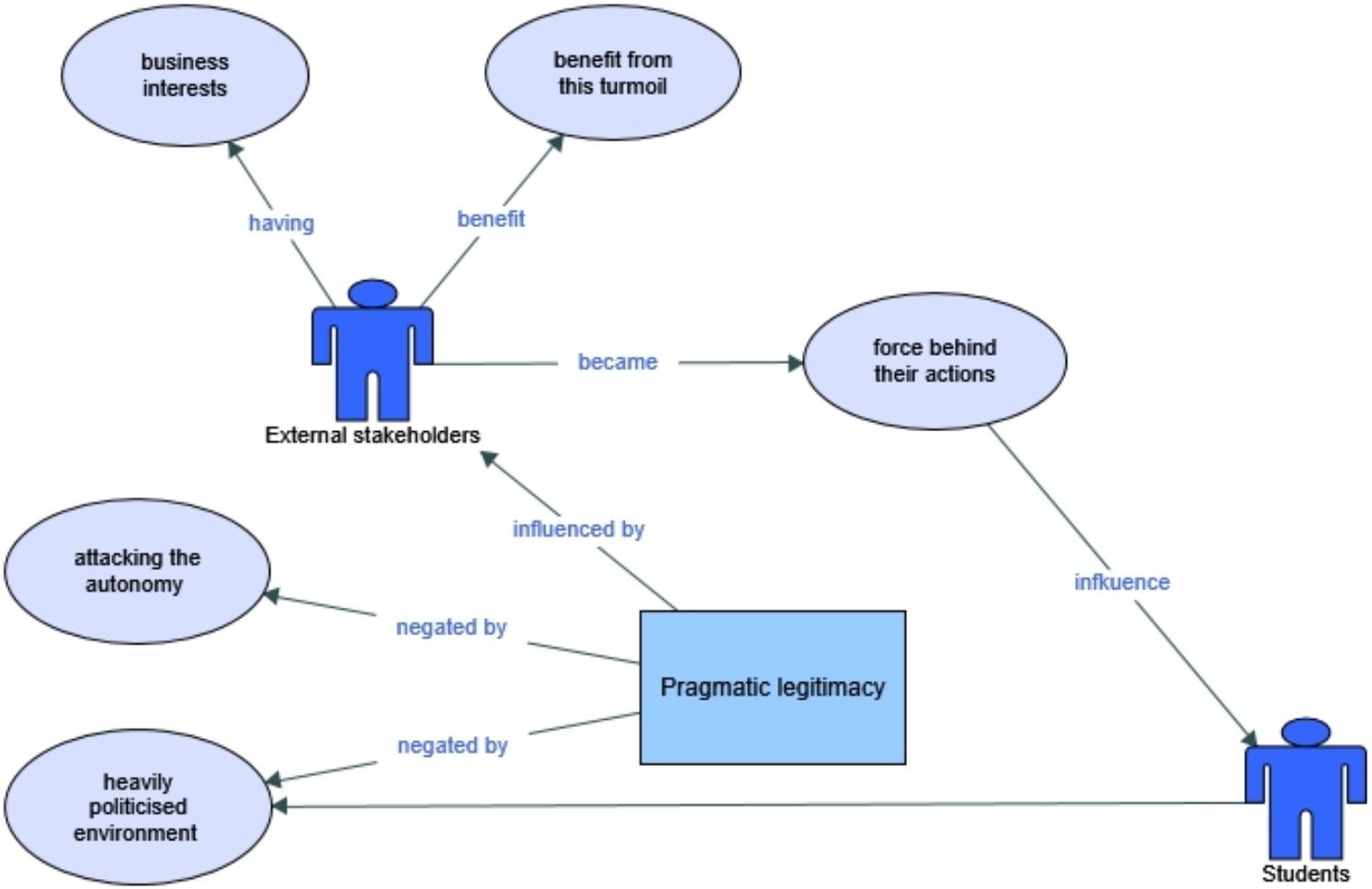


Figure 5-14 Competing pragmatic legitimacy

Deciding which meetings to conduct and with whom became critical during radical change. Different stakeholder groupings requested meetings with management during this period. Whilst the management of radical change requires urgent interventions, the recognition of formally established structures at the university – and dealing with these structures according to the mandate in the statutes of universities, assisted these structures to retain their legitimacy.

The value of an analysis of legitimacy lies in the fact that senior managers are sensitised about the different sources and issues that impact the legitimacy. Radical change can be steered more effectively when an awareness of legitimacy factors exists.

5.1.3.6 Dynamic influences on sense-making

The data analysis revealed that *cultural sensitivity*, *inner conflict*, *prolonged uncertainty*, and *generational differences* played a significant role in the sense-making process. Subsequently the broad coding of text under the theme 'feelings' were refined to distinguish between cultural references and descriptions that pointed towards generational sensitivity and inner conflict.

Second-order themes	**Representative data**
T. Cultural sensitivity	T1. "I have to say I'm tougher than that. I have faced much worse during an era long gone by" (Vice-chancellor F)
	T2. "One dimension that has troubled me immensely about the recent student activity is the essentialisation of race and the view that by virtue of the pigmentation of your skin, you are white. You therefore can't say anything about black people and the experience of black people. You must be silent, keep quiet. You know nothing about it. And I think this is so antithetical to what it means to be a university" (Vice-chancellor K)
	T3. "One of our outstanding professors, who happens to be a white woman, an excellent academic, has been so frustrated because in political science, three black students were simply saying to her, 'Shut up! You don't know what it means to be black" (Vice-chancellor K)
	T4. "a South African, who wrote a book on ubuntu, and he was taken to task: 'What do you know about Ubuntu"? (Vice-chancellor K)
	T5. "I always assume that other people will look at it from a colour issue and then I feel ashamed, like my colleagues will blame me. I put myself between students and the managers to say: we are black." (Director A)
	T6. "You know I cannot help that I am born in South Africa and that I am white. – But I do feel embarrassed to be part of this environment that has become so shallow and where there is such a lack of collegiality" (Director D)
	T7. "The reality is that our people they are also having that issue of the colour difference. They will target a white person but also try to negotiate with the black person" (Director A)

Second-order themes	**Representative data**
	T8. “I think it was racialised by staff members. Most of the times – I speak general – most of the white colleagues were extremely unsympathetic – thought the students to be out of order” (Executive Dean C) T9. “… helped to know where colleagues are coming from and these discussions must continue” (Director J) T10. “I also had white colleagues who understood. For me it was never the issue of race - it was the issue of poverty” (Director E) T11. “You know one white colleague told us his story – how he grew up with his mother – a single parent and how they had to sell stuff to have food on the table. I realised you can’t just paint people with the same brush; we all grow up with the narrative that only blacks people are poor or have suffered in the past. I am glad about the opportunity” (Director J) T12. “Once again, I realise, whoa – we are dealing with a very complex system here. You know – now you can also understand why some people was so angry during #FeesMustFall, because they know they struggled themselves” (Director J) T13. “I want to expose the myth that it is only African students who are needy” (Students A)
U. Inner conflict	U1. “Staff really feel discouraged. It is not so much the decisions as the way in which decisions are implemented” (Director D) U2. “Staff do not necessarily fear change, but just wanted their voices to be heard and wanted clear and regular communication, as well as a visible presence from faculty management” (Dean A) U3. “I was a bit conflicted, from an ideological point of view I was with the students, but also from management and being responsible for a campus I also had to protect the campus and the interest of the university and we had to ensure exam and classes could take place” (Executive Director A) U4. “I was so conflicted. On the one hand I feel angry towards students, then I get really encouraging messages from students” (Deputy Vice-chancellor C) U5. “I was really in an inner conflict about what I was seeing unfolding” (Director B) U6. “I experience it as a personal dilemma or internal conflict when command and control began to dominate as opposed to care and co-create. If that is not there anymore – I do not want to work there any longer” (Executive Dean B) U7. “Now because you are in management you cannot say you are scared, although. One dean said I am not going to risk my life and he never came” (Deputy Vice-chancellor B) U8. “You sit with people that are sad and angry and disappointed and you have to lead them whilst you are unsure yourself. That was my biggest frustration” (Director H) U9. “I have decided to take early retirement. I feel that I cannot be part of something I do not trust anymore” (Director H) U10. “Then you begin to doubt yourself – Why can’t I get this situation under control” (Deputy Vice-chancellor C)
V. Generation difference	V1. “it was very much linked to gender and age. With gender I mean men and women experienced it different. Men handled it differently. Older men different than younger men, because the different generations were exposed to different things. Older men (myself included) experienced different things (like war- going to the army) so for them this hostile environment is something they have experienced before. Whereas younger men are more focused on children, house, and families. Many females were traumatised

Second-order themes	**Representative data**
	and they were depressed – since it was something they felt impacted the future and the future of their children. Will their children still be able to go to university?" (Director I) V2. "I think different groups of staff reacted differently. I would say – some of the older people, especially white older female staff members were really shocked and scared and perceived the protest actions and events on social media as disrespectful, unlawful and felt student should be disciplined and suspended" (Deputy Vice-chancellor C) V3. "One of the strange things for me is to see young student leaders with no tolerance among them. The attitude seems to be: 'So if you don't agree with me, I'm going to go and get my baseball bat and smash you up. If I don't get my way, I'm going to deal with you" (Vice-chancellor G) V4. "The new calibre of student leaders – they are very arrogant. No respect for an elder person. In the African culture there was always respect for older people. But the generation we sit with now – They are disrespectful to their very own people. They are disrespectful to top management" (Executive Dean A) V5. "the average age of journalists in South Africa? 25. So you sit with journalists who associate more with the students, because they come from that system, than with university management. You could clearly see that in the media" (Deputy Vice-chancellor D)
W. Prolonged uncertainty	W1. "the biggest question is about the future of my children. Will they find good jobs? Will they still receive quality education?" (Deputy Vice-chancellor C) W2. " We have succeeded in facilitating physical access, but I don't think we have been that successful in facilitating access to knowledge" (Vice-chancellor K) W3. "I also felt disappointed in our government, they were slow to respond and when they did, they made announcement of which the impact and magnitude wasn't properly comprehended. I always felt so proud of HE and what it stands for" (Deputy Vice-chancellor C) W4. "I feel mostly sad. I mean in the end, I think universities will outlive this funding crisis, but in this process, we lose a lot of excellent academics and researchers" (Deputy Vice-chancellor C) W5. "People do not feel relaxed and being under constant pressure makes them feel incompetent" (Director D) W6. "my observation is that people have disengaged and have lost the light in their eyes" (Director D) W7. "Staff really feel discouraged. It is not so much the decisions as the way in which decisions are implemented" (Dean A) W8. "they also get to experience the wrongness of student anger, the disrespect and the anger. As universities we were not able to protect them" (Executive Director B) W9. "My own sanity at the moment is not be involved at work, just hide in my own corner and work on my book …". (Director D) W10. "But you can clearly see the morale is not where it is not where it is supposed to be" (Executive Director B)

Table 5-8 Representative data on aspects influencing personal experiences of sense-making

Senior black staff members who were students in the apartheid era compared the fee protests with their struggles and used these personal recollections of activist activities as a point of reference to make sense of the student protests. Although many references are made to race and

gender when describing situations, several of the respondents strongly felt that reactions to situations should not be used to generalise assumptions about race and culture. The purpose of this analysis is not to make any conclusive statements about race and culture but rather to understand its role during the sense-making of radical change. Also, more than one participant related an incident where the essentialisation of race and the view that by the pigmentation of your skin, you are white or black and therefore cannot say anything about the experience of another race, were experienced. This was perceived as antithetical to the notion of the university as a knowledge institution.

The cultural sensitivity was exacerbated and put at the centre by protesting students who used gender and race to label staff. Some staff members felt that the behaviour of students from a certain race group would be associated with them, because they are from the same race. The necessity for institutions to create a multicultural environment became apparent. The rude behaviour specifically towards female staff was specifically pointed out by participants.

> "*and there was no respect for women you know whether you are a woman or a man you were being pulled out of classrooms" (Dean of Students A).*

The work ethic and performance of colleagues also came under scrutiny as a result of the increase in work pressure.

> "*we are in an environment where people have to do the work of other people. Some colleagues have to carry other colleagues. My comment is not race-related – it is about capabilities, lack of creative capabilities" (Director I).*

Culture is not simple and cannot be reduced to race and gender (see 3.1.1). Age, socio-economic background, political affiliation, language, and employment history, were all factors that influenced the personal experiences of staff.

Inner conflict was experienced by the majority of senior leaders. The unplanned radical change evoked a lot of emotions. Most of these feelings were negative, such as sadness and disappointment. The storyline that prevailed throughout the research was an experience of inner conflict. Ultimately it has to do with the fact that the noble call for free education, the interpretation thereof, as well as the uncontrolled violence, caused this inner conflict. As elucidated under the challenges of leadership legitimacy, crisis leadership decisions around

security, caused conflict as the rational myth of the university being an 'open space', was violated (see 5.1.4.3). Strong security presence and access control prevailed to enable universities to keep the academic project running. These measures, unknown to university staff, coupled with poor communication and crisis decision-making portrayed universities as non-caring institutions. Inner conflict influenced behaviour and decisions. Whilst students and staff could express their feelings, senior managers felt that their leadership role required the suppression of emotions in public.

Generational differences further influenced sense-making of legitimacy judgements during the radical change process. Older men still had to complete compulsory military service, thus the violence and environmental instability were not first-time experiences for most of them. Black staff members who were born before 1994 related these violent incidents to activist activities that they experienced as students during apartheid. Staff members with children were concerned about the future sustainability of higher education. Older people have a longer career track record, and often families that depend on them. As one participant responded:

> *"Ask me that question 20 years ago you would have received one answer – it would be a different answer than the one I am going to give now" (Director I).*

The students, mostly millennials, are known as a generation who want instant answers. However, during these protest actions, the behaviour of protesting students was described as arrogant and disrespectful by different race groups. The generational difference can also partially explain the difference in social media usage.

As these protests were nationally embedded, staff members were affected not only by what happened on their campus, but what happened with colleagues and family and friends at other universities. They felt helpless. The risk of not paying close attention to the well-being of staff undoubtedly impacted productivity and performance.

5.1.4 Personal values

During the semi-structured interviews, participants were asked what they value about their family, friends, neighbourhood, their work, and the world they live in. As indicated in the literature review, the values of change agents influence the development of rationality criteria that in turn contributes to the legitimacy of institutions (see 2.5.3). Institutional and leadership

legitimacy are enhanced when decisions and actions are consistent with social values (see 1.7.2). The reciprocal relationship where social actors influence one another, as well as the environment, is affected by the values and belief systems of the social actors. Furthermore, Gouveia et al. (2010) also alluded to values as an expression of human needs. The way social actors understand and interpret an event, influences both their responses and managerial actions. To make sense of institutional legitimacy during radical change, it is important to contextualise the personal values that guide leadership behaviour. The value model of Schwartz (1992) was used as nodes to codes the different value statements (see 2.2.3).

5.1.4.1 Openness to change

As per the job profile of senior managers, they are supposed to provide strategic leadership, and change is part of strategic leadership. It is thus not surprising that many leaders value openness to change and also get fulfilment from the work when dealing with challenges. Not having hidden agendas and collaborative decision-making strengthens the openness to change. The ability to contribute to a solution is fulfilling to them. Self-direction, taking action and the desire to create, innovate and solve challenges in life were evident from the data. Supportive statements are indicated in table 5.9.

Personal value	**Representative data**
Self-direction	"How do I cope with this? By not having a hidden agenda" (Vice-chancellor H) "I use some people as a sounding board, to check whether I'm still connected, because I do not know everything" (Vice-chancellor H) "I have always said let me give time to friends to listen to them, to look at their lives and also to look at their challenges because when you sit with them you discuss success and also you discuss challenges, and when you discuss challenges it gives perspective" (Director A) "It's self-actualisation…for me it's not about ambition, it's about doing the best, what you can, right now. I want to work at a place where I feel I can learn and I can grow" (Deputy Vice-chancellor D) "What motivates me to implement it is we don't have a choice … we have to believe in education, that we can influence the life of the youth so that they can be the leaders of the future" (Deputy Vice-chancellor C)
Stimulation	"I get excited when there are challenges to solve. I am solution orientated. I get fulfilled when I am part of the contribution towards the solution" (Director A) "It motivates me if people realise that I can contribute to a solution" (Director A)

Table 5-9 Representative data of openness to change as a personal value

5.1.4.2 Self-enhancement

Universalism and benevolence are values associated with self-enhancement. The need for self-enhancement is another factor that senior managers value in the workplace. The need for achievement and bringing about positive change is paramount. Achievement refers to personal success by demonstrating competence according to national standards. The ability to bring about change is cited as one of the most important reasons for remaining in a senior management position. Included in the desire to achieve, is the notion of not merely performing a task, but performing it well and to have the resources to succeed. Senior leaders also acknowledged the importance of establishing a trust relationship as a prerequisite for a successful team to steer change. At the same time, senior leaders acknowledged that they still have improvement areas.

Hedonism. Senior managers also recognised the need for friendship and a work-life balance, as one participant indicated "*we share, laugh, cry and do all the silly things together*." For some participants, work-life balance also meant keeping the two worlds separate. However, most participants acknowledged that it was impossible during this period of radical change.

Value	**Representative data**
Achievement	"freedom helps you to grow. Instead of just this where you cannot bring about change" (Deputy Vice-chancellor B)
	"I don't want to be a slave. I value support - that if provided to do my work efficiently and I also the fact that things must be done properly" (Executive Dean C)
	"When I sign a performance agreement, I sign it with myself and when I evaluate my performance, I am very critical about areas where I can improve and things that I did well" (Director F)
	"Sometimes … you give them {students] another opportunity – you talk to them like a strict father – you give them some study guidance and then they are grateful for the opportunity and they succeed. That gives me personal work satisfaction" (Director H)
	"What is important is trust- getting people to trust and trusting people and seeing people succeeding" (Executive Dean D)
	"My work is also very important to me – sometimes too much" (Director B)
	"The reason I left [my previous job] was because I couldn't do my job due to lack of means and I was expected to deliver" (Director C)
	"For me it is important to have time to do my work – not only do it, but to do it properly" (Director D)
	"What will make me stay is the believe that I can influence change" (Executive Director B)
	"…things that you achieve. I like to see immediate results" (Executive Director B)

Value	Representative data
Hedonism	"We share, laugh, cry and do all the silly things together" (Deputy Vice-chancellor B) "For me it is about a work life balance. I try to keep the two worlds separated. I am quite involved in a community project but that is in my personal life. My home consists of my cats and a few feathered friends. So I have to make sure they are looked after. I try not to read my e-mails over the weekend. Of course, this in not always possible – like during #FeesMustFall it was not" (Executive Dean D) "I think it is to encourage one another and to share experiences, but it is also to have fun" (Executive Director A)

Table 5-10 Representative data of self enhancement as a personal value

5.1.4.3 Conservation

Conservation includes security, conformity, and tradition. Valuing tradition includes respecting, committing, and accepting the customs and ideas that one's culture or religion provides. Security includes the valuing of safety, harmony, and stability of society. Conformity refers to a restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses that can upset or harm others and violate social expectations and norms. Senior managers have an awareness of past experiences and those experiences inevitably inform the process of sense-making. Several participants referred to their own experiences and used that as a basis to formulate opinions about the present.

> *"I think if the free HE could be managed in a better way it could have worked – like you study free and then work back. That is how I studied. That is how most of my generation studied" (Director J).*

The safety both at work and at home is of paramount importance for all senior managers.

> *"What I value most is safety, especially safety of my family, safety of the people around me and here at work safety of our employees and students" (Director C).*

Personal value	Representative data
Tradition	"It is where I grew up. It is the place that I know best. That is for me important (Director H) "The financial bandwidth is also called a cognitive bandwidth – where is the attention of the students? I think if the free HE could be managed in a better way it could have worked – like you study free and then work back. That is how I studied. That is how most of my generation studies" (Director I) "… I stayed there – because I grew up in a township and I knew the people and the people are looking after each other … so I stayed (Executive Dean D)
Security	"They're not that, and it' s unpleasant that we have to use them and they're intimidating and they make you feel scared. But no one gives me any decent answer to the question, 'If someone's safety is at risk, what must we do?' (Vice-chancellor I) "… but it is quiet and safe" (Deputy Vice-chancellor B)

Personal value	Representative data
	"We [neighbours and I] are not close friends but we look out for one another" (Director E)
	"What I appreciate is that my environment is relatively safe– although we live in jails" (Director I)
	"Safety and then the other issue to have cordial relations to look after one another" (Executive Director A)
	"Important to me … I think it is safety. Safety in the sense that I don't want [my child] to walk home from school and wonder if she is going to get raped or not (Deputy Vice-chancellor D)
	"Important to me is security and being able to provide for my son" (Director B)
	"What I treasure is safety" (Dean of Students A)
	"What I value most I think it's safety especially Safety of my family, safety of the people around me and here at work safety of our employees and students" (Director C)
Conformity	"Not making mistakes. I like discipline. I like rules" (Director B)
	"Ethics should be what you do when people don't see you. We have to enforce the rules on the campus" (Director B)

Table 5-11 Representative data of conservation as a personal value

5.1.4.4 Self-transcendence

The majority of answers related to self-transcending values referred to universalism and benevolence. Universalism refers to the understanding, appreciation, tolerance, and protection of the welfare of all people and nature. Benevolence refers to the preservation and enhancement of the welfare of those with whom one is in frequent personal contact.

During radical change, participants referred to deliberate activities they undertook to ensure balance in their life. In line with the institutional culture of collegiality, some senior managers acknowledged that their job is more than merely making a living; the workplace and colleagues become like a family where one can draw courage and support. This also implies that the feelings and emotions of others during this period of radical change were of concern to senior managers. The importance of change and understanding of emotions are highlighted in the literature by several studies (Elfenbein, 2007; Frijda, 1996; Hay, 2014). As there are only 26 public universities, events at one university influenced emotions and feelings of staff and students at other universities.

The poor socio-economic conditions in South Africa, underpin the commitment to social justice. One participant said:

> *"… the definition of rich in the African context – you have a flashing toilet – a roof over your head, electricity, more than one set of clothes, water, constant access to food – then*

we realise we are rich. We are more than privileged. We complain with bread under our arm" (Director I).

Honesty and respect were highlighted as two core prerequisites for successful senior leadership management. Statements from participants that underscore universalism and benevolence are summarised in table 5.12.

Personal value	**Representative data**
Universalism	"bringing balance, whether it's to one's health or one's emotive state or one's cognitive state. I'm relying also on my religious connections and membership of the church and being a leader in the church, drawing strength from that spiritual side. It is very important" (Vice-chancellor G)
	"… being able to draw courage and support from my spouse and my colleagues, allowed me to be able to step up to the plate, so to speak. Without that, I certainly would have battled" (Vice-chancellor G)
	"I do have spiritual support" (Vice-chancellor K)
	"When we go to a work situation, we say that I want to earn a living so that I can survive and take care of my family. But you join a family you don't realise that you are signing up a bigger thing that you can understand. You start making relationships; you start understanding that it's a myriad of systems and complex issues, feelings, and emotions" (Director A)
	"fairness for everybody" (Deputy Vice-Chancellor A)
	"I am very sorry to sound like somebody who doesn't have hope. I see people are becoming individualistic – just looking at their own pockets. Words like Ubuntu does not hold true anymore. Unfortunately, that is the world order now" (Executive Dean C)
	"Because of the interconnectedness of humanity and the interconnected of the challenge we face in HE, what that means is that we have to work across institutions, across our own narrow domains" (Vice-chancellor A)
	"It was quite interesting to see – some of those who have been sitting at home, slowly put their toes in the water. And once they began to see it is safe and they are part of something bigger than themselves to get the academic year done, they actually followed" (Executive Dean D)
	"I would want people to be safe, have good health care and the opportunity to maximise their potential" (Deputy Vice-chancellor C)
	"I know I am in Marketing but I see myself playing a bigger role for the country" (Director J)
	"everyone has a worth that makes him or her equal to somebody else and I think fairness is I'm very big on fairness being fear to people, so that is why the justice is so important to me" (Dean of Students A)
	"I think the one thing that will make somebody not to be my friend is someone who is an opportunist or somebody who is unethical or someone who is self-centred" (Dean of Students A)
	"I think to rediscover our humanity what it is to be a human amongst all the technological advancements" (Executive Dean B)
Benevolence	"Yes, anxiety and stress escalated dramatically during that period, but one draws on one's peers, on one's partner" (Vice-chancellor G)
	"what it is important is to support and love each other" (Director A)
	"I think that is what we planted as a seed for them to be generous and caring" (Director A)
	"Life it's not about me, it's about a network of people who are together looking at the same

Personal value	Representative data
	direction" (Director A)
	"Peace and happiness. To do well and to achieve success and to make sure that the work that I do make a difference in the lives of the 40 000 students at my university" (Deputy Vice-Chancellor A)
	"What society does should benefit society" (Deputy Vice-Chancellor A)
	"I value about them their honesty, support and mainly the affection that they show towards me" (Director E)
	"… health, love and happiness. And I think what is important in a family in our context is that we should not lose hope. We have to try and stay positive" (Director I)
	"the definition of rich in the African context – you have a flashing toilet – a roof over your head, electricity, more than one set of clothes, water, constant access to food – then we realise we are rich. We are more than privileged. We complain with bread under our arm" (Director I)
	"I think a lot of people are scared about what happened in the past and we have to keep on working to make the future better.
	"To make an impact in the sphere and area I am working in and to make a difference … I think most of the important is redress of past imbalances and to ensure everyone has a fair" (Executive Dean D)
	"… opportunity to grow up and be successful" (Executive Director A)
	"to be accepted and to do the things that I do well is important for me" (Deputy Vice-chancellor C)
	"life must be balanced" (Director J)
	"… support and the caring. It can't be anything else. We must be there for one another - and respect the diversity of the world, where we live" (Deputy Vice-chancellor D)
	"So we have to believe in education, that we can influence the life of the youth so that they can be the leaders of the future. We complain about the basic school system but we train the teachers. We have to do something better, because we are part of the cycle" (Deputy Vice-chancellor C)
	"Respect is for me very important. I believe in shared values, collegiality. I respect people" (Executive Dean A)
	"We have to create a safe environment where everybody can make a living" (Executive Dean A)
	"I feel bad about the country the corruption the entitlement the Injustice how people would trample on somebody else to get something for themselves rather the violence you know the way government officials misuse funds" (Dean of Students A)
	"respect and it's about really valuing each other" (Dean of Students A)
	"I would to think that we have a very bright future, I think it's a very good university, our qualifications are good. We so many flagship programmes and so many unique things but it's the people part the relationships part that's dwindling" (Dean of Students A)
	"Money is not an issue anymore. An issue would be the relationship I have with my seniors and the relationship I have with my employees that's what matters to me" (Director C)
	"want to be happy within myself with where I am at this point in time and in my work and in my relationships" (Executive Dean B)
	"What is really important for me in my work it to make a difference –to add value. What I get the most satisfaction from is when you can empower young people – not only students but also staff" (Executive Dean B)
	"Honesty - people should not try to create a skewed image about something by using small lies. It is about respect for people. If you respect people you don't tell lies" (Director D)

Table 5-12 Representative data of self-transcendence as a personal value

5.1.5 Rational myths and radical change

This section explores the rational myths that were challenged during the radical change process. Rational myths inform the behaviour, decision-making, and perceptions around the legitimacy of public universities as institutions. During the radical change process, several rational myths were challenged and the questioning of these rational myths affirmed or negated the legitimacy of universities as institutions of higher learning.

Subsequently, all the coded nodes related to rational myths are summarised in figure 5.15. The following four broad categories of rational myths were identified (i) the university as a space; (ii) the university as a knowledge hub; (iii) governance and management of universities as well as the (iv) brand promise associated with universities. The university as a space is associated with an open space and a social construct closely involved in community activities. During the period of radical change, the institutionalised elements such as culture, symbols, cognitive systems, and normative beliefs were questioned.

Secondly, the existence of universities is legitimised by the knowledge it produces and the graduates it delivers that contribute to socio-economic development. Thirdly, this study has confirmed that the institutional space and emotional security and psychological well-being of its staff are inseparable. Similarly, the lines between the personal legitimacy of a senior manager and the institutional legitimacy of the university become interwoven. Governance and management structures and principles also contribute to rational myths about how a university should function. The last clustering of rational myths deals with the brand promise associated with universities as social institutions.

Rational myths associated with Universities

Space	• Open space • High degree of autonomy • Place of engagement and debate • Multicultural • Open space • non-politicised	• Academic freedom • Stimulating academic environment • Place where knowledge is constructed • Solve societal challenges • Integration of Research, teaching and learning and community engagement • Pillar of truth
Governance and management	• Independence of Council • Unquestioned academic decisions • Government acts as role model • Subject to environmental influence • Allow consultation • Highly regulatory environment • Distance between operational- and senior management • High levels of stakeholder engagement • University as a state organ • Disciplined environment • Changed from 'student follows funding' to 'funding follows student'	• Qualification will get you out of poverty • Social justice agenda • Economic opportunities • Equity of provision • Job security • Delivering well-rounded graduates • Economic empowerment • Place of opportunities • Social justice agenda Institutions are associated with success
		Knowledge hub / ***Brand promise***

Figure 5-15 Rational myths

The majority of the rational myths that underpin the notion of a university do not seek to understand institutions as sustainable organisations or focus on the size and shape of universities, but rather the type of space they perceive a university to create and the brand promise associated with university graduates. The rational myth that university autonomy is regarded as indispensable to the role and work of the university, is the first rational myth that was challenged by the students' fight for free education.

The governance and management structure of the university was the second rationality criterion whose legitimacy has been challenged during the call for free education. The protest actions clearly showed that the legitimacy judgements about the charging of tuition fees and the university serving the "public good" were no longer trusted by students. The disillusionment of students regarding employment led to challenging the system that was supposed to ensure a better future and an equal society.

"the protests would never have happened had we not reached in the society a level of polarisation. I think that there is a political polarisation in the society largely born out of two things: the growth of inequality in the society and the polarisation that that engenders, and then, of course, the anger that flows out of corruption, the failures of the state to deliver…" (Vice-chancellor C).

The students that participated in the protests, were also conflicted during this period of turmoil.

"Students are in a difficult situation. They know that there is more than that which they projected us to be. At the same time, they see us as representatives of a social order with which they have profound difficulties. And so you're a manager or a leader representing a system and also, at the same time, someone that they can see understand their issues as well" (Vice-chancellor F).

5.2 Findings of metaphor analysis

The previous section focused on the data analysis by identifying the triggers of radical change as well as the legitimacy demands and questioning of rational myths during unplanned radical change. Recently, researchers in organisational behaviour and management increasingly started emphasising the importance of metaphors in the process of individual sense-making (Cornelissen and Clarke, 2010, Schmitt, 2005).

The concept maps in figures 5.17 through 5.22 summarise all of the data created by the metaphor analysis. In the figures, the tenors are indicated on the left-hand side. The meaning constructs are indicated with circles whilst the original vehicle terms of the metaphors are indicated on the right with a rounded rectangle. In this way, metaphors become an effective way of sense-making as it allows the use of a known object with specific characteristics to express feelings and lived experiences in such a way that the metaphor enhances the understanding of the message.

5.2.1 Metaphors preceding the announcement of free higher education

Figure 5.16 summarises the metaphors used by participants when they referred to the environment before the introduction of free higher education. The constructs stemming from the metaphors provide a rich description of participants' personal experiences before the period of unplanned radical change. Almost all of the constructs are associated with negative emotions and the metaphors convey feelings of unpleasantness, hurt, injuries and pain. The overall disillusionment with the government as well as mistrust in national leadership is clearly expressed through the use of vehicle terms such as "*bitter taste"; "a fish rots from its head"* and *"sabotage the country*". It was also known for quite some time that tuition fee increases are high and state subsidy is decreasing. What was unexpected, the magnitude with which the protest action erupted. The protest actions were described as a "*wave*" that swept over universities. Sense-making of the #FeesMustFall protest actions points towards the fact that the driving forces were a combination of deep-rooted issues, spanning various, yet interrelated, socio-political and economic factors, and it was characterised by disparate ideological positions and distrust of government.

Figure 5-16 Concept map summarising metaphors describing the period before the free higher education announcement

5.2.2 Metaphors following the announcement of free higher education

Figure 5.17 summarises the metaphors used by participants to describe their reactions to the president's announcement of free higher education. Although the need for change existed, the unexpected announcement of free higher education and the time at which it was done, caused turmoil at universities and introduced a period of unplanned radical change. This is evident from description such as "*dropping a bombshell*". What made this change unique from other changes, was the strong ambiguity that existed as to whether this was the best solution. Senior managers were put in a situation where they had to take ownership of a decision forced upon them whilst doubtful about the long-term sustainability. Participants felt the president "*sabotaged*" the country and only offered a "p*iece-meal*" solution that is, in fact, a "*bandage on the wound*" and not solving the original factors that triggered radical change. It left senior managers in a state of flux "*not having their ducks in a row*".

A real leadership dilemma exists when leaders have to implement a decision, whilst not being convinced of the appropriateness of the solution. *"The solution to the challenges facing our public higher education system is not just additional funding. It's a fundamental rethink that is required. We need to reimagine our education from early childhood right across to university. What we have at the moment is not working, and we're busy putting a band-aid here and there and we are not confronting what we should be doing. Just throw everything off the table, start from scratch (Vice-chancellor K)"*. What the sense-making process revealed was an exploration of some of the institutional myths and legitimacies that inform South Africa's higher education functioning. As stated earlier, radical change is complex and multifaceted.

When clustering the metaphors that describe the reaction to the announcement made by the president point towards a loss of normative legitimacy picture of "*causing destruction*", and a "*dangerous*", "*distasteful*" and "*painful*" environment emerged. Government as perceived as "*causing destruction*", causing "*intentional harm*" and a president acting out of being "*desperate*" and "*trapped*".

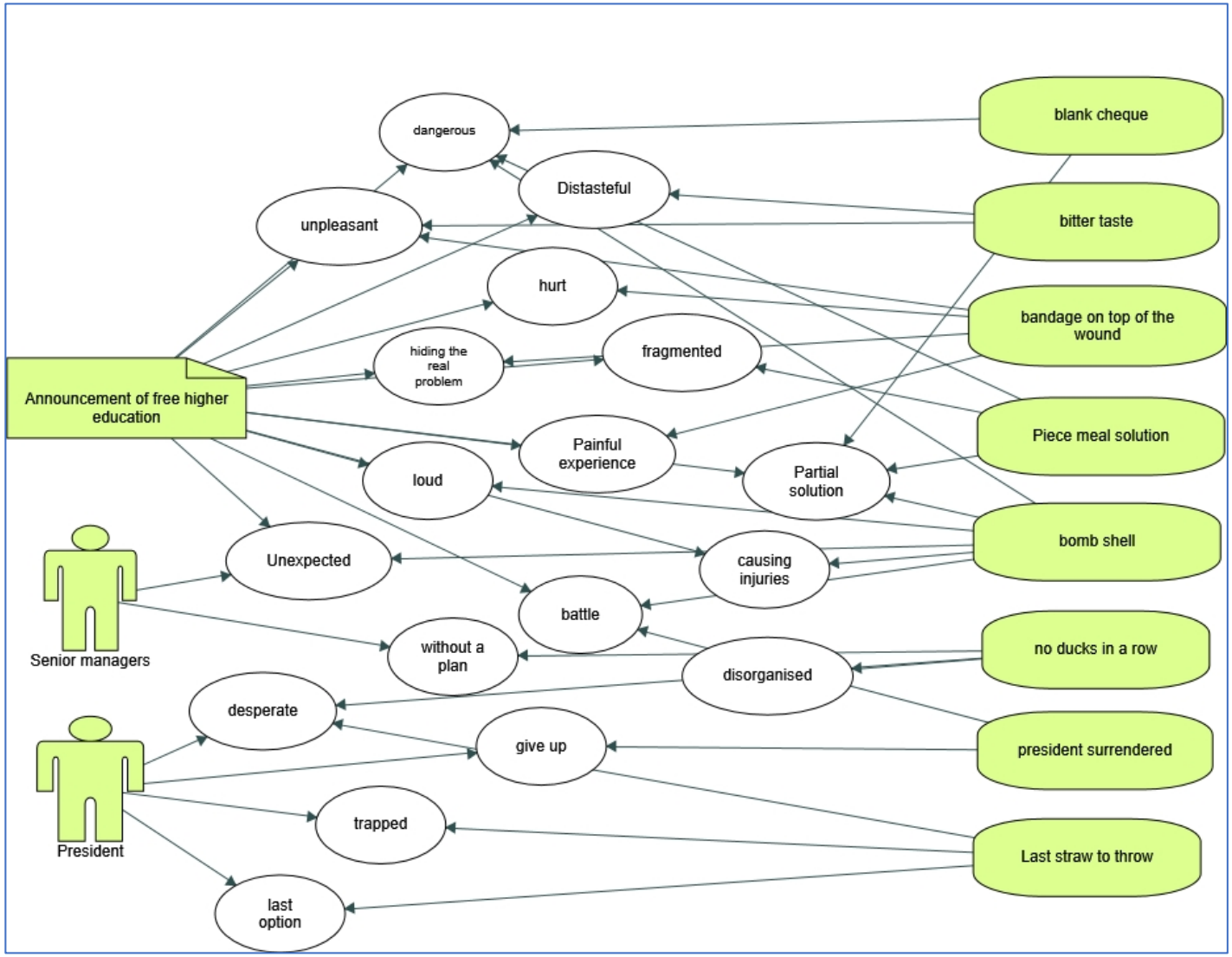


Figure 5-17 Concept map of metaphors used when free higher education was announced

5.2.3 Metaphors describing universities as institutions during radical change

The following metaphors are used to describe universities during the period of unplanned radical change: "*patient*", "*jail*", "*boat*", "*battlefield*", "*hit by a tsunami*" and "*a treasure*". A concept map summarising the metaphors is presented in figure 5.18.

Instability hampered attempts at sense-making and sense-giving during radical change. The vice-chancellor and the senior managers are responsible for the running of a university and have to communicate with various constituencies. In conditions where universities were perceived as "*battlefields*" and "*hit by a tsunami*" – communication also suffered and as a result, the legitimacy judgements of vice-chancellors were questioned.

Participants described universities as a "*battlefield*" - a space that is "*dangerous"* and "*under attack"* and an environment where there are "*enemies*". As stated in the literature review in chapter 2, the educational system represents a highly institutionalised context and has a high impact on social behaviour. These metaphorical associations form a sharp contrast with the traditional notion of universities rooted in history, traditions, symbols, and cultural values that prevail at universities (see 2.5.1). University autonomy is built on the rationality criteria that the search for truth depends more on the exegesis of texts than on scientific discovery. Universities suddenly found themselves in an environment where scientific discovery gave way to unexpected political battles and universities were "*hit by a tsunami*" emphasising once again the "*force*" and "*extreme conditions*" under which senior managers had to function.

The value of universities as knowledge institutions is expressed by comparing them to a "*treasure*". At the same time, the risk of losing institutional legitimacy is expressed and a university is described as a "*patient*" in "*need of treatment*" and a "*boat*" that is "*exposed to severe conditions*" and can "*sink.*" The reference to a sinking boat implies three potential detrimental scenarios for universities: that universities run the risk of losing institutional legitimacy; that universities might lose good academics and that they might not be financially sustainable.

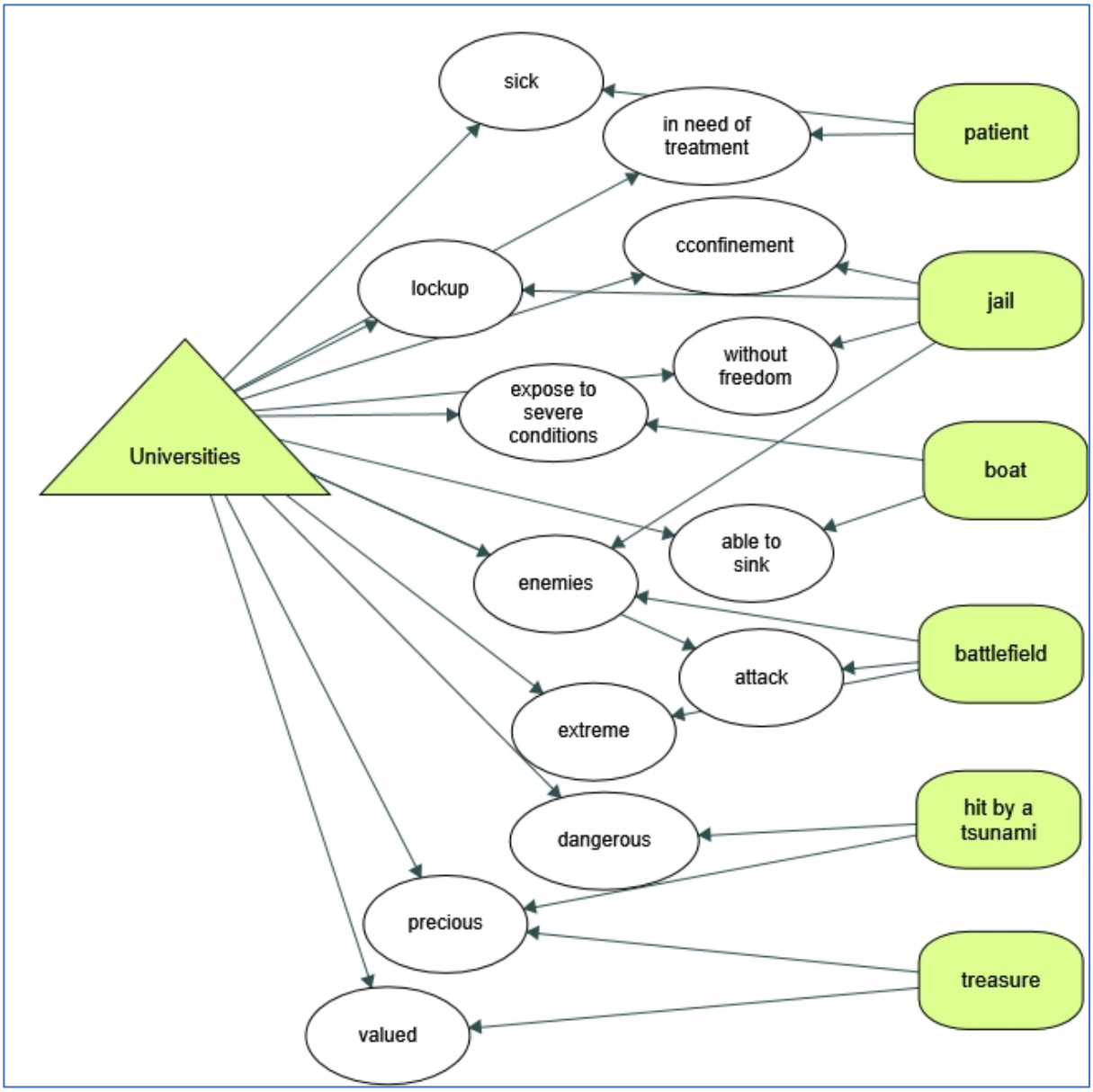


Figure 5-18 Concept map of metaphors used amidst the unplanned radical change

5.2.4 Metaphors on the higher education landscape and the relationship between staff and management

Universities are highly institutionalised organisations, slow to change and rooted in cultural, economic and political history (see 2.5.1). The period of radical change was characterised by "*extreme opposites*" where people experienced the best and the worst of student behaviour and anecdotes of poor and excellent decision-making strategies applied by senior managers. Being under tremendous pressure, coupled with the high level of instability resulted in senior managers taking a "s*hort-term focused*" decisions, with "*superficial*" arguments. These metaphors are summarised in figure 5.19.

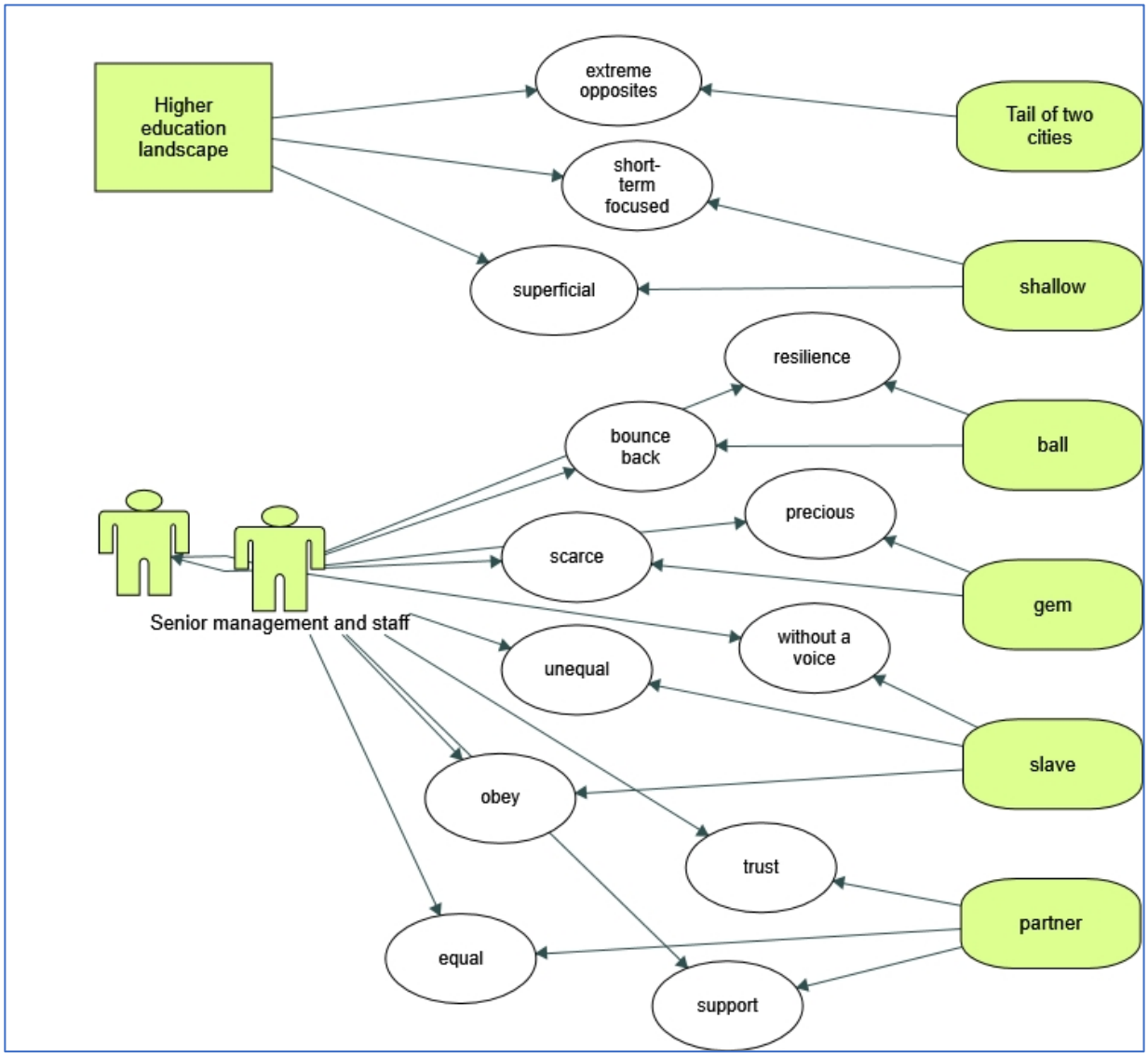


Figure 5-19 Concept map of metaphors describing the higher education landscape and the relationship between staff and management

Most senior managers had a high regard for the support of other members of staff. The staff members are compared to a '*ball*', signifying qualities such as "*resilience*" and the ability to" *bounce back*" and a "*gem*" that is "*scarce*" and "*precious*". Senior management regarded staff as "*partners*" embedding notions of "*trust*", "*equality*" and "*support"*. The importance of being recognised as a "partner" was emphasised by the metaphor used by a participant (Executive Dean C), who had the negative experience of being treated like a "*slave*" – "*unequal*" and "*without a voice*", the opposite of an equal partner.

5.2.5 Metaphors of senior management's actions during unplanned radical change

Legitimacy has been recognised as a vital resource for power-holders looking to develop and maintain authority and ensure compliance. Hough et al. (2013) referred to the tripartite between normative (instrumental), empirical (perceived) and moral legitimacy (see 1.7.2). This tripartite is evident in the narratives emanating from the semi-structured interviews. The loss of normative legitimacy forced senior managers to deal with different agendas. The senior manager felt it added to his legitimacy to embark on sense-giving. Yet, it was exactly this process that was not seen as very effective. Instead, senior managers were perceived as "*hiding*" and "*crumbling*" under pressure.

The involvement of external political forces on the side of students was evident. This also raised a question about the legitimacy of student leaders. During this time, the leadership legitimacy of senior managers was tested and they had to be "*permeable*" in dealing with problems and "*absorb*" the criticism.

The #FeesMustFall movement was effectively a call for radical social justice. What cannot be ignored was that the movement became a vehicle for many smaller groups with their particular demands. The difficulty experienced by senior managers in dealing with the multiplicity of issues in a national unstable environment, resulted in senior managers being described as "*chess pieces*" that are "*manipulated*". When the normal business-as-usual operations could not proceed, performance legitimacy of senior managers came under scrutiny. Through sense-making is became clear that the call for free higher education was driven by ideological contestations, whilst university management tried to respond with rational arguments to explain the financial crisis and motivate for the continuation of the academic project. The different metaphors are summarised in figure 5.20.

The lack of legitimacy on a national level forced universities to adopt roles and responsibilities that were not part of their mandate under normal circumstances. In this regard senior managers were "*close to the fire*", signalling both the seriousness of the situation as well as the fact that national agendas were now being put on the table of senior managers.

Both internal and external stakeholders repeatedly criticised the presence of private security and police, but then indicated in personal discussions that they understood its necessity and felt

safer as a result. What made the position of the senior management even more complex was the fact that the vice-chancellors were also caught between two groups of stakeholders – the government with diminishing state funding and students demanding free higher education; neither of the two issues were within the realm of vice-chancellors to solve. A university is among other things, a social organisation, a public service, a medium of standardised socialisation processes, a system of role expectations and group formation and a place of science (Nohria and Ghoshal, 1997; Westney, 1993). The presence of police and security formed a sharp contrast to the idea of a university. The metaphor "*trapped between a rock and a hard place*" refers to the struggle to reconcile the two institutional environments (that of a university and that of a police force) representing different ideological values. This ideological dilemma of brining police and security onto university campuses that are associated with openness, academic freedom and robust debates, was further complicated by the fact that students, claimed to fight a noble course, yet had the propensity to violence. Amidst the turmoil, legitimate issues could not be dealt with effectively, because of the prevalence of illegitimate elements.

Legitimacy refers to the capacity of the system and change agents to create and maintain the belief that the existing way of running a university is most appropriate for all stakeholders (Tost, 2011). In many instances, protesting students did not grant vice-chancellors an opportunity to speak and they sometimes had to be escorted off the university premises for their safety. In a certain sense, the silence of senior managers resulted in a voiceless leadership and this led to senior managers being perceived as having an "*ostrich*" mentality.

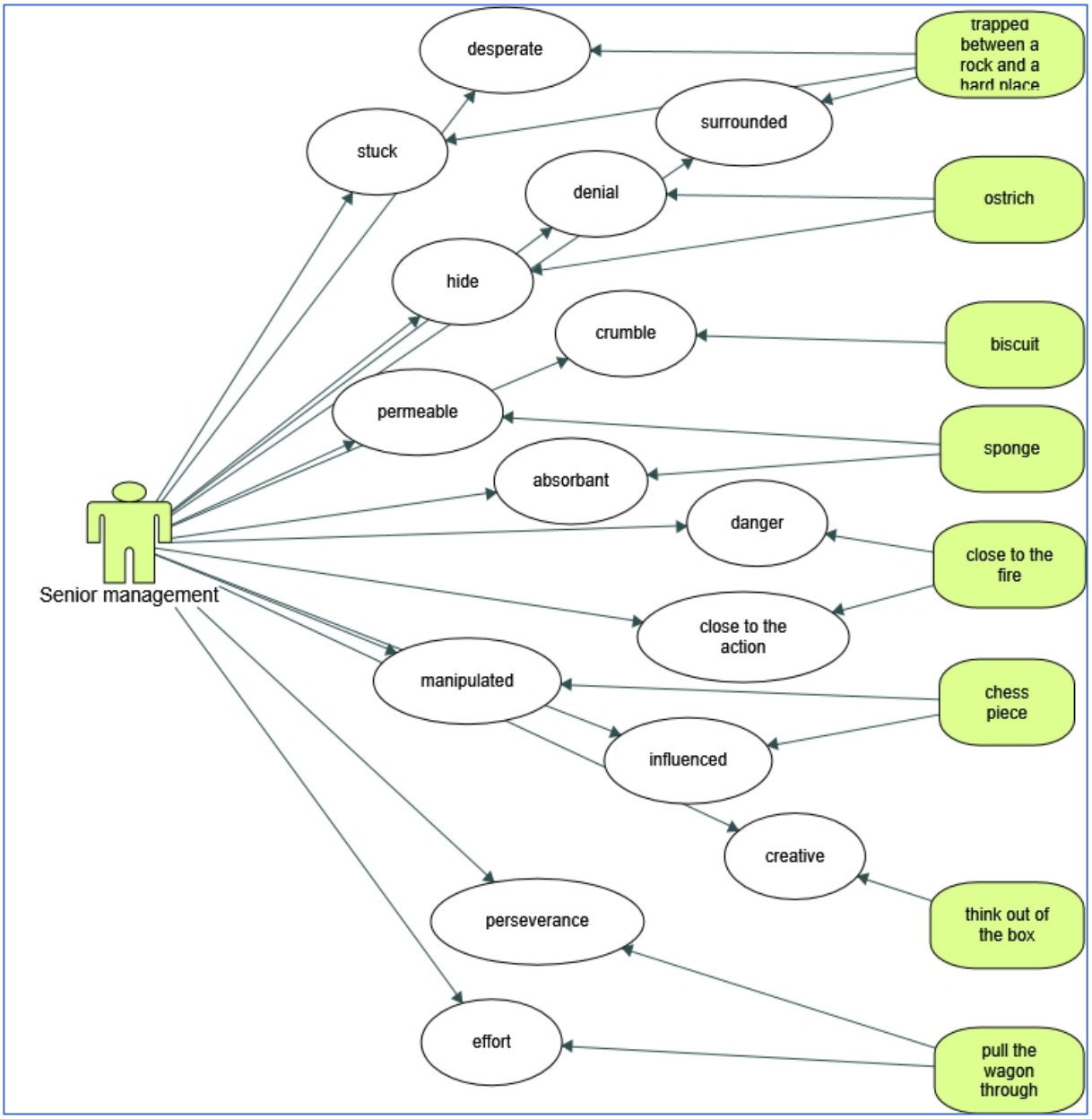


Figure 5-20 Concept map of metaphors that describe senior management's actions during unplanned radical change

"Looking back at what we have been through: When it matters we pull the wagon through. The right people have the ability to make a plan. I do feel it is unfair that we have to make plans, think out of the box – standing in the middle between the politics (Director B)."

I argue that any lack of legitimacy on a national level forces senior managers to adopt roles and responsibilities that are not part of their mandate under normal circumstances. The different metaphors, "*chess piece*", "*sponge*", "*biscuit*" and "*trapped between a rock and a hard place*"

all underscore the fact the senior managers were acting outside the normal framework associated with stable leadership.

The fact that the violent student protests eventually led to the introduction of free higher education has strengthened the legitimacy of protests as an acceptable and appropriate way of challenging organisational and governmental legitimacy.

On the positive side, legitimacy is not completely lost, as senior managers are recognised for being able to deal with complex issues by "*thinking out of the box*" and confidence is expressed that they will "*pull the wagon through*" signifying perseverance and effort.

"*We know why we are here. We know what we should do to make the university function. We are also the people taking all the hammering. I think we are like tortoises. We just use years of wisdom to continue moving forward – slowly but surely (Director B)".*

5.2.6 Metaphors of the period after the introduction of free higher education

The risk of losing staff has been recognised by senior managers. Academic staff are referred to as the "*currency*" of a university, a valuable commodity, being stretched in terms of workload like an "*elastic band*". The risk of staff members leaving universities to join other institutions are recognised as public universities are "*fishing from the same pond*", also referring to the limited pool of academics.

"The sector is rotating a lot of staff – we are fishing from the same pond (Executive Director B)".

"I felt more and more that the quality of the university is not determined by the quality of the students that you take in, but by the quality of your staff. We need to nurture them as that (staff) determines the currency of your University (Executive Dean B)".

The concern about the welfare of staff became evident: *"I am not sure that they realise they will have to adapt to the new type of student sitting in front of them. Our think our academic are elastic bands – they are stretched. The boundaries are shifting. They have to maintain academic standards. And what is in the best interest of the student. A lot of rules are up for grabs now – are they still the right rules? So I think academics they have to get to grips with the new type of students. This is not a good thing – it means that the pressure that academics feel is real (Executive Dean D)".*

The current status of universities is equated with an endangered rhino: *"because they [students] say everybody must have access, but then they destroy building and properties at the same time. They complain about not having enough accommodation and then they burn down a residence. What scares me is that now we are not only losing buildings, we are losing academics and if you lose academics you are in trouble of remaining a good university with research performance. Education might be free – but what education will be left? (Deputy Vice-chancellor D)"*. Participants expressed the realisation that in many instances they have to "*pick up the pieces*" and "*heal wounds*", confirming that the period of radical change had consequences and left staff members scarred.

The importance of consensus amongst senior managers is considered an important factor for future success: "*Students will come and ask different people the same questions. They try to test the system. It goes about the fact that we should have the same vision, sing the same song (Director B)"*. "*The performance of a division depends on the intent. You get what you measure - so it depends on the vice-chancellor which song he sings (Executive Dean C)."*

The metaphors describing the period following the introduction of free higher education is captured in figure 5.21.

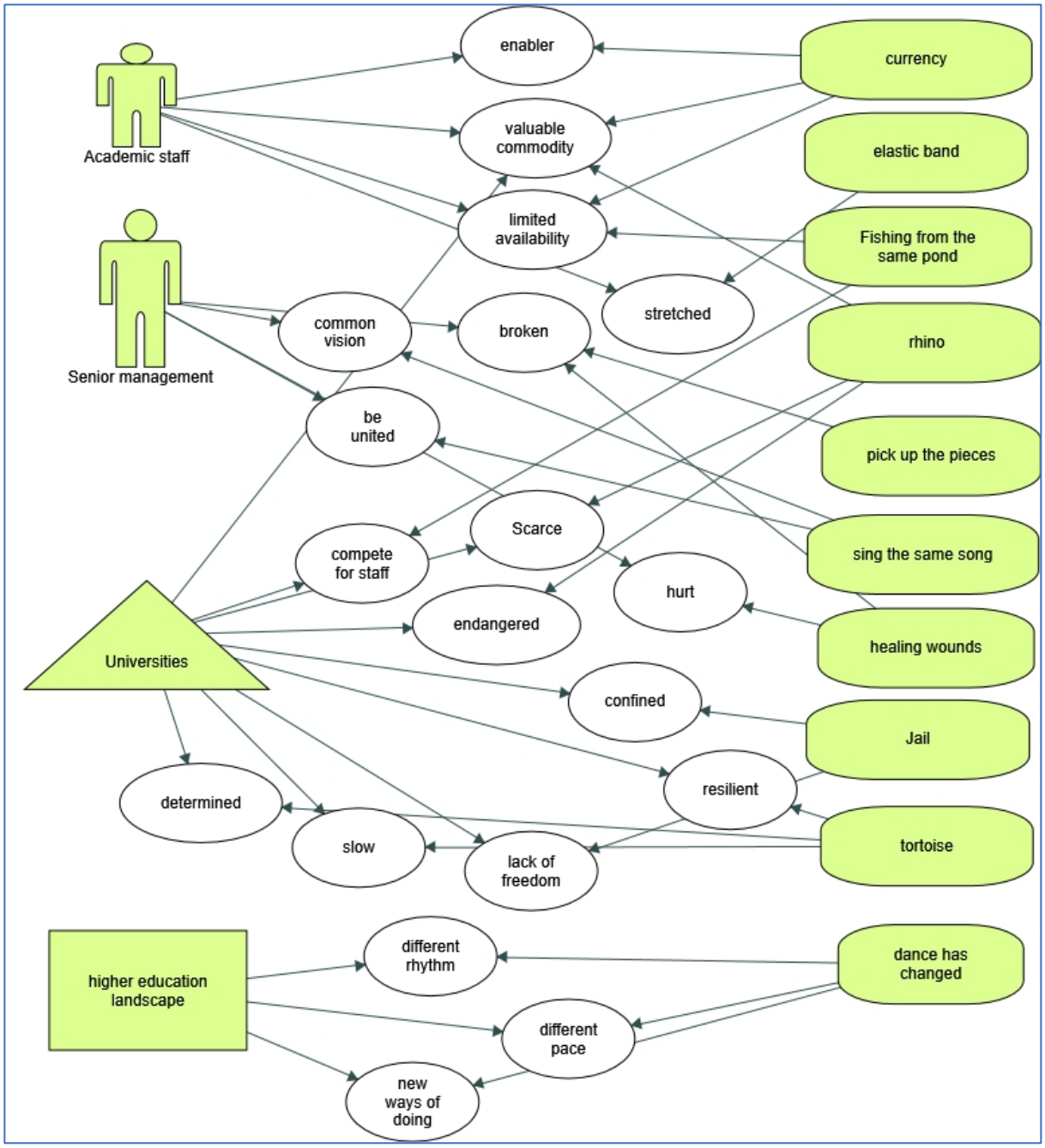


Figure 5-21 Concept map of metaphors used to describe the period after the introduction of free higher education

"when the music changes – so does the dance. I think higher education is fundamentally a different space but I think people are still struggling to understand that – to understand that the dance has changed and what is now required of us (Executive Dean D)".

"The culture of the university changed from open to closed. Where is was an open public environment or space – it became a closed jail where security is everything. We are open

again, if you understand what I mean, but the principle of a closed space has remained (Director I)".

5.3 Triangulation of data findings

Triangulation is not only used to increase the validity of the data. It also assists in explaining a complex phenomenon by allowing the integration of multiple methods and multiple perspectives (see 4.2.4). In a similar way triangulation advances the sense-making of legitimacy during radical change. A synthesis of the findings is subsequently presented to answer the sub-questions that underpin the research.

5.3.1 Institutionalised practices that triggered radical change at South African public universities

The first research sub-question is concerned with the institutionalised practices that triggered the unplanned radical change. As highly institutionalised organs of state, formal managerial and governance structures, as well as the functioning thereof, are well established in institutions and all decision-making processes are described within the functioning powers of these structures. These structures include amongst others, faculty boards, senate, and council. Similarly, processes and procedures across the entire student life cycle, spanning from recruitment, admission, and placement to class attendance, the setting of tuition fees, examination, graduation and becoming an alumnus, were repeated over time, assigned similar meanings, and became widely accepted (see 2.1.2). The institutionalisation of universities is further driven by funding frameworks that are based on a combination of performance- and formula-based funding and predetermined performance indicators (see 3.3.1). The punctuated equilibrium model of change is evident in the history of universities in South Africa (see 3.2.2). Although earlier changes were radical, none of them was so unexpected and caused such turmoil in the country as the introduction of free education. A summary of the major events that took place since the first democratic election is captured in the timeline in figure 5.22.

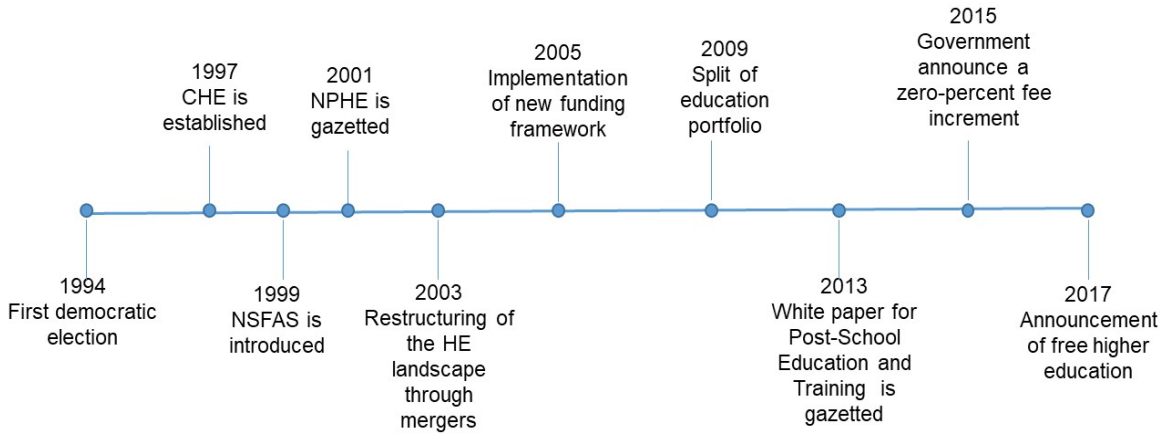


Figure 5-22 Timeline of major events in South African higher education

The following four institutionalised practices largely contributed to the unplanned radical change and the introduction of free higher education:

5.3.1.1 Limited access

The intake of students is regulated by enrolment plans. An enrolment plan becomes in effect a contract between the Ministry and the university council. The measurement of meeting enrolment targets is done by balancing the projected figures in the enrolment plan with the actual enrolments. The output targets are met by delivering graduates and then tracking their career paths. Good employment rates affirm legitimacy. Meeting enrolments targets reinforce the notion that university positions are 'sought after' as many students are turned away when a programme has reached its enrolment target. The rational myth called 'effective enrolment management' does not concern itself with the students who did not get admitted or students who never applied to a higher education institution because of funding constraints. This is explained by Lepsius (2017) in his five-dimensional framework consisting of the development of ideas into rationality criteria, the differentiation of validity contexts, the means to sanction, the externalisation of problems not covered by the institution, and also establishing conflict and mediation processes between different institutions (see 2.1.3). The future of young people outside the university falls outside the action context of universities, henceforth it is externalised. However, for the students that come from those very poor communities, it not external to their social context. This dichotomy between the external environments of the different actors contributed to the delegitimisation of the university's financial decisions. Furthermore, universities offer academic qualifications and as such, they have a proven

influence on their graduates' career prospects; however, they are not responsible for the supply-and-demand structures of particular career opportunities.

5.3.1.2 Escalating tuition fees

When setting tuition fees, there is a clear detachment of the university budgeting process and the community's socio-economic status. Universities used the differentiation of validity context to focus on financial sustainability and the safeguarding of South Africa's academic project, whilst regarding issues of financial support to needy students as falling outside the university's validity context (see 3.4.1). Institutions tend to isolate the validity context of their rationality criteria towards the environment. The high tuition fees were perceived by stakeholders and students as widening the gap in society and led to the questioning of university legitimacy.

5.3.1.3 Outsourcing of non-core activities

Outsourcing of non-core activities, such as security and garden services, has been implemented by all public universities, justified by the organisation of economic activity (see 3.4.4). Many institutions succumbed to the pressure during the protests and insourced these services. As institutions tend to conform and also maintain legitimacy in the community, the insourcing by some institutions increased the pressure on other universities to maintain legitimacy and shifted the boundaries of the validity context of institutions. Universities suddenly had to account for the consequences of outsourcing and were labelled as ethically indifferent. During this period of radical change, vice-chancellors quickly grasped the need to liaise and share information, as a decision at one university, influenced behaviour at other campuses as social media created solidarity amongst students across the country.

5.3.1.4 Slow pace of transformation

Universities are highly institutionalised organisations and slow to change. Students experience the culture at universities through the entrenched practices, policies, naming of buildings, symbols, and traditions of the university. Increasingly students alleged that the pace of change of public universities is too slow and this lack of transformation result in unjust discrimination and an unwelcome academic space. Related to transformation is the profile of academic staff. The term "white privilege" was used by students, aggravated by the fact that the majority of professors are white. According to students, management was aware of these transformation challenges, but instead of acting on it, reverted to do only cosmetic changes. A broader

understanding of the impact of these institutionalised practices and how the implementation thereof is perceived by internal and external social actors can assist in steering change and maintaining institutional legitimacy.

5.3.2 Influence of legitimacy demands on universities' ability to deal with radical change

Legitimacy is not a constant state but a condition that is persistently evaluated. Legitimacy is also a vital resource for universities to uphold the authority and extract high-quality compliance from their students. As institutions of society, universities have been institutionalised over many decades. Lepsius (2017) pointed to the complexity of the dual role of change agents, who are actors in the institutionalised system but must also fulfil the role of change initiators and then need to question the very same rational myths they are part of. This complexity is evident throughout this change process. Unlike planned or incremental change, this period in higher education was volatile, necessitating decision-making under pressure.

The legitimacy demands are multi-faceted and not only does legitimacy subsist in the eyes of the beholder (see 1.7.2), it also depends on the lens through which the beholder is evaluating an action. Different stakeholders have different expectations and different opinions about the call for free education. As a result, a decision like the closing of a campus, would be met by mixed reactions. For some, it might enhance leadership legitimacy (e.g. the safety of staff and students are a priority); for others, it might seem like a lack of leadership legitimacy (e.g., management gives in to student demands). What emerged from the qualitative analysis is a very clear view of how the legitimacy of higher education institutions was perceived during the fee protests and subsequent implementation of free higher education. The following types of legitimacy were either affirmed or negated during the radical change: normative, empirical, moral, leadership and pragmatic legitimacy. The second finding is that the different forms of legitimacy overlap, so they should not be viewed as separate occurrences, but rather cognitive judgments that collectively impact the legitimacy of public higher education institutions. Thirdly – normative legitimacy supersedes the other forms of legitimacy. It is harder for a parastatal organisation to maintain legitimacy once normative legitimacy has been compromised.

During this period of change, both students and staff were divided. It was for example possible to support the call for fee-free education but not the insourcing of services or the removal of certain symbols, yet, the issues were so intertwined that engagement about separate issues

became almost impossible. The underlying notion that the implementation of free higher education, and more specifically how it was implemented, is not the best solution for a sustainable future, is evident throughout the interviews. This free higher education model holds no obligation on the side of the students after completing their studies.

University history and ideology matter during legitimacy judgements. History and ideology became secondary driving forces during the fee protests and resulted in different points of contestation at the different universities (Langa, 2017; Siyabonga, 2015). The data analysis has shown that where ideology and rationality are on the opposite sides of the table, the meetings did not yield a positive outcome. The fact that the violent student protests eventually led to the introduction of free higher education has strengthened the legitimacy of protesting as an acceptable and appropriate meaning of challenging organisational and governmental legitimacy (see 5.1.4). The senior manager felt it added to their legitimacy to embark on sense-giving. Decisions by senior managers are viewed within the broader societal context and not only the impact of the decisions on the university. Managerial actions, such as consulting, information-sharing and transparency enhanced the understanding of actions and also influenced legitimacy judgements. However, the nature of the change was so unexpected and caused such chaos, that time and opportunity for sense-giving by senior managers were limited.

5.3.3 Rational myths and radical change

As a way of remaining legitimate, rational myths become vested in institutions, in such a way that social actors assume the structure, processes, and procedures as the right way of doing things, without questioning its merit (see 2.1.2). Over time, these rules become rational myths, meaning they become taken-for-granted and are sometimes not even directly associated anymore with the values that led to its formation. As isomorphism occurs and rational myths are widely shared, the perceived reality of these rational myths is strengthened (see 3.4.3). Four broad categories of rational myths were identified: (i) the university as a space; (ii) the university as a knowledge hub; (iii) governance and management of universities as well as the (iv) brand promise associated with universities (see 5.1.6). The integrated nature of radical change, rational myths, legitimacy, management, and the notion of a university as a knowledge hub are evident.

The process of institutionalisation and the establishment of these rational myths over time will be discussed further under the theoretical contribution in chapter 6.

5.3.4 Personal values and emotional responses of change agents during radical change

The mapping of the values of a social actor with that of an institution is not a simple one-on-one mapping. The literature study as well as the data analysis revealed some of these complexities in matching values and leadership decision-making in institutions. As elucidated in the literature, a legitimate organisation is one whose values and actions are consistent with external values and expectations from various stakeholders (see 2.2.1). At the same time, organisations adopt structures and practices to gain legitimacy. Although this may sound straightforward, the complexity arises when these structures and practices become rational myths, and, after some time, their origin or epistemological value assumptions are not questioned any longer– it is taken for granted. This becomes a vicious cycle: initially institutions adopt certain practices to gain legitimacy and after acceptance thereof, they use this legitimacy to defend the rational myths they have adopted. An intervention is then necessary to break this cycle. At public universities in South Africa, the student protests became the trigger for forcing senior managers to reconsider a number of rational myths (see 5.1.6).

The behaviour and decisions of social actors are influenced by values as values guide human actions and values are also an expression of human needs (see 2.2.3). Also, the personal values and past experiences of senior managers influence their decision-making (see 2.2.1). Adding to this is Degn's (2015) observation that different managers deal with change in different ways (see 1.7.5). During the period of turmoil that characterised the unplanned change at public universities legitimate and illegitimate demands were put forward that senior managers had to deal with. In many instances, the outcome of decisions became a double-edged sword because of conflicts where: (i) the legitimacy of a decision was questioned yet unavoidable; (ii) the demands were illegitimate, but managers had to deal with them to try and regain stability, (iii) responses to demands often had other unintended consequences, (iv) managers agreed to outcomes that they would not have done under normal circumstances; (vi) to succumb to one demand just led to more demands being put forward (see table 5.1).

5.4 Summary

The sense-making of legitimacy during the period of radical change was explored. To increase the rigour and trustworthiness of the research as well as to accommodate the complexity of the institutional environment, three methods of triangulation were used. For this study, triangulation was instrumental in not only reinforcing the validity of the research, but also in providing a holistic understanding of the complex institutional environment wherein this radical change process took place.

As part of triangulation, thematic analysis as well as dynamic discourse analysis were used for data analysis. During the thematic analysis. broad coding was used to extract information from the different data items where after first-order categories, second-order themes and aggregated dimensions were identified. The role of personal values and rational myths during radical change were also explored. The data analysis revealed a list of environmental factors that preceded the introduction of free higher education and the findings pointed towards this change process as unplanned. After presenting this context of events, the further consequences of the announcement of free higher were explored. The different forms of legitimacy that collectively impacted public universities were unpacked.

Through the dynamic discourse analysis process, the different metaphors used by participants to describe the period of change, were identified. The metaphors were clustered according to the unfolding of events as follows: the period before the announcement of free higher education, the announcement by the president that higher education will be free, the perceptions during the implementation process, leadership behaviour during this period, and the period following the implementation of free higher education. An analysis of these metaphors provided an opportunity to uncover value judgments that shaped the narratives of participants.

CHAPTER 6 SUMMARY FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The earlier chapters of this study presented a literature review of institutional theory, radical change, legitimacy and sense-making, as well as an analysis of the development of universities into highly institutionalised organisations. Subsequently, the context of South African higher education as well as a description of the series of events that led to the introduction of free higher education were presented and critically analysed. A phenomenological research methodology was used to collect data where after qualitative data analysis and dynamic discourse metaphor analysis were used to interpret the data. The purpose of this chapter is to synthesise the discussion of the foregoing chapters in the context of the original aims and purpose of the study as outlined in chapter one. The chapter is organised as follows: first, an overview of the study is provided, followed by a discussion on the theoretical implications, the practical implications as well as policy implications. The chapter concludes with the limitations of this research as well as areas for future research.

6.1 Overview

The #FeesMustFall movement started as a peaceful student protest action in 2015 at the University of the Witwatersrand but quickly turned into unprecedented disruptive and violent protests at all public universities in South Africa. The violence, disruption and countrywide upsweep of continued student protest actions were not something that university management had to face before. To try and understand the decisions made by senior university managers during this period, it is necessary to make retrospective sense of the events. Institutional change cannot be studied without consideration of the environment in which it operates. The first step in looking at legitimacy and sense-making during radical change is to contextualise the cause of the radical change as well as the environmental and institutional practices that prevailed at the time.

6.2 Sense-making of legitimacy during radical institutional change

The findings of this study draw on the literature review as well as the results from the fieldwork that included interviews, participant observation, and document reviews. This research study sought to explore how university executives meet the demand for legitimacy from internal and external stakeholders during unplanned radical change. The exploration focuses on institutionalised practices that triggered radical change at South African public universities; the

influence of legitimacy demands on universities' ability to deal with radical change; the identification and reconsideration of rational myths during radical change; and how personal values and emotions of change agents with varying positions and levels of power within the university influence radical change.

6.3 Theoretical implications

The following theoretical implications for dealing with unplanned radical change emerged from this study:

6.3.1 Institutional theory

Adding to the work of Battilana, Leca, and Boxenbaum (2009) and Hardy and Maguire (2008), the findings contribute to institutional theory by analysing the impact of rational myths on radical change at universities and how these rational myths support apathy rather than the disposition to change. It also became evident that the questioning of one rational myth had a snowball effect – and led to the questioning of more rational myths. The findings emphasize that the legitimacy of institutions extends beyond formal structures and performance scorecards. This study reinforces the importance of institutional elements such as culture, symbols, naming of buildings, normative beliefs, and traditions, as well as the sources of these elements, in defining the legitimacy of universities. Contrary to the findings of Greenwood and Hinings (1996), who classify institutional theory as a tool to explain similarity and not focus necessarily on organizational change, this study has demonstrated the importance of institutional theory during radical change.

The central argument of neo-institutionalism is that institutions shape action and an action does not take place in a vacuum (see 2.1.1). This argument is becoming increasingly important as the interconnectedness of social actors is enhanced through social media. Whilst Scott (2004) acknowledges the prevalent importance of external institutionalization on the structuring and functioning of organisations, this study underscores the impact of government legitimacy on university legitimacy. The legitimacy of a university during this period of radical change was not attributed to a single institution, but rather to the cluster of public universities.

This study contributes to the body of literature on legitimacy by illustrating the importance of institutional legitimacy during radical change as well as the factors that negate or enhance

legitimacy. (Bitektine, 2011) claims that the most appropriate forms of legitimacy in a particular situation depend on the dimensions of the institution's activities, staff, processes, and relationships (see 1.7.2). Normative legitimacy, empirical legitimacy, leadership legitimacy, moral legitimacy, and pragmatic legitimacy came under scrutiny during the introduction of free higher education. The frustrating institutional environment was caused by disillusion and social inequality; the subverted national environment; escalating trends in the South African higher education and the questioning of rational myths that inform university functioning.

Trust plays a significant role in legitimacy judgements and the findings revealed how distrust between social actors, negated institutional legitimacy. In addition to this, the media not only influenced legitimacy judgements, but also perceptions about trust. Furthermore, the prolonged uncertainty was attributed to a lack of decisive leadership. This mistrust in management led to the questioning of decisions taken by management. Trust in decision-making is closely linked with moral legitimacy as it relates to the trustworthiness of a change agent. This study has confirmed that the classification of different forms of legitimacy can overlap as can the sources of legitimacy.

Transparent decision-making is key to maintain legitimacy. The importance of communication by management underpins the establishment of a common understanding and acceptance of the change. Many university leaders acknowledged that they did not communicate effectively during the period of radical change. Communication was hampered by the unpredictability of events and volatility of the situation. However, staff members were not necessarily looking for solutions to be communicated, rather the communication should serve as a signal that they are valued and their safety is paramount in any forthcoming decision. The context within which decisions were taken, was not always understood and that led to distrust and a loss of legitimacy.

6.3.2 Sense-making

Sense-making of the interplay between legitimacy judgements, reconsideration of rational myths and the emotions of senior managers, enhances the understanding of radical change. This study reflects on the interplay between legitimacy judgements, rational myths, and the emotions of senior managers during the steering of change in highly institutionalised universities. Adding to the five-level framework for institutionalisation proposed by Lepsius (2017), this study has highlighted the complex web of emotions, disruptions, sense-making, reflective questioning,

and legitimacy judgements that underpin the decision-making of senior managers. The use of metaphors by senior managers, as a way of expressing emotions and feelings, became apparent during the interviews. Sense-making can be seen as a process of creating meaning and interpreting reciprocal exchanges between senior managers and the complex environment. Therefore, sense-making of legitimacy, which is intrinsically stimulated by human values, cannot be understood without also focusing on personal values. Dynamic discourse metaphor analysis proved to be a valuable instrument in enhancing the sense-making of legitimacy during radical change. The decision-making process of senior managers, indicated in the inner circle, feeds into the re-evaluation of rational myths and forming of new realities as part of the process described by Lepsius (2017) and indicated in the outer circle in figure 6.1.

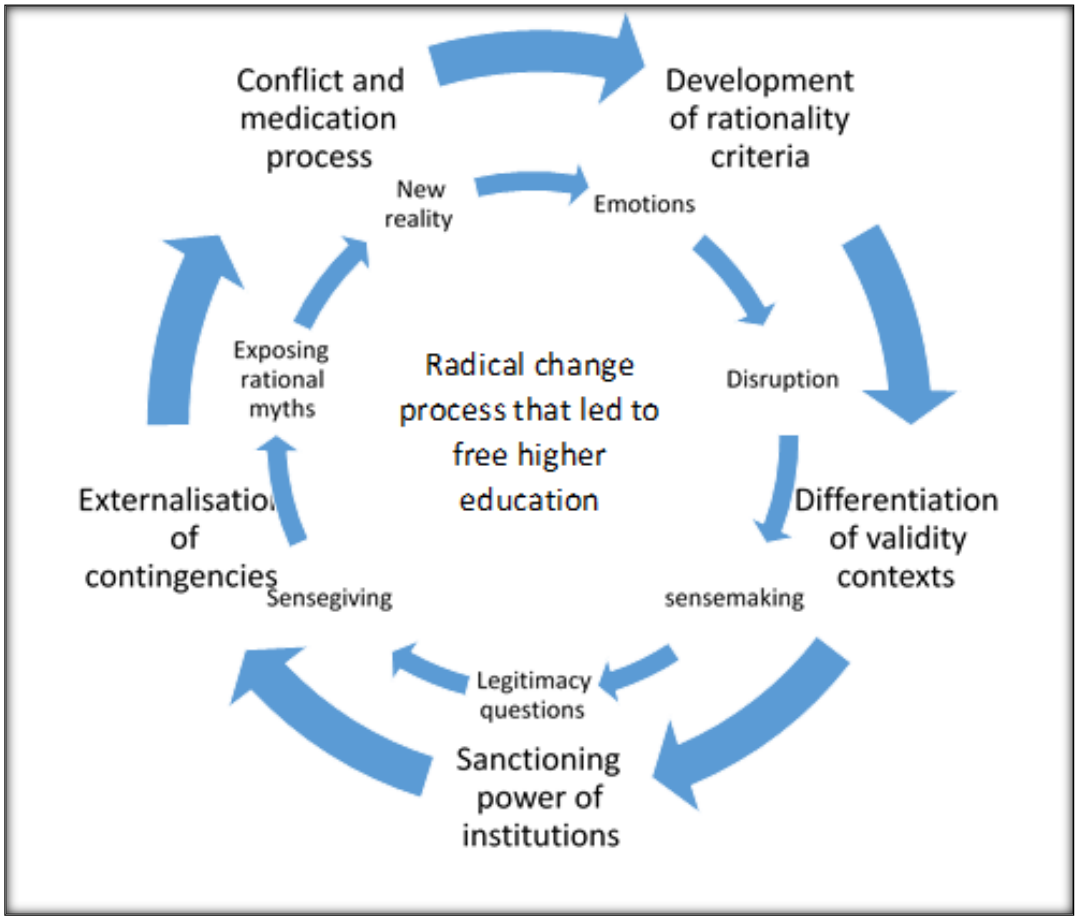


Figure 6-1 Forming of new rational myths during radical change

The value of sense-making of legitimacy lies in the fact that it assists in understanding the complex dynamics of unplanned radical change and the interpretation of events that allow for retrospective construction of meaning. These insights can assist senior managers in dealing with

future situations. Institutions cannot be created instantaneously; they always have a history; of which they are the product (see 2.1.3). This study contributes to filling the gap on how universities, as highly institutionalised organisations deal with radical change. A conceptual framework of sense-making of legitimacy during radical change at universities is provided in figure 6.2.

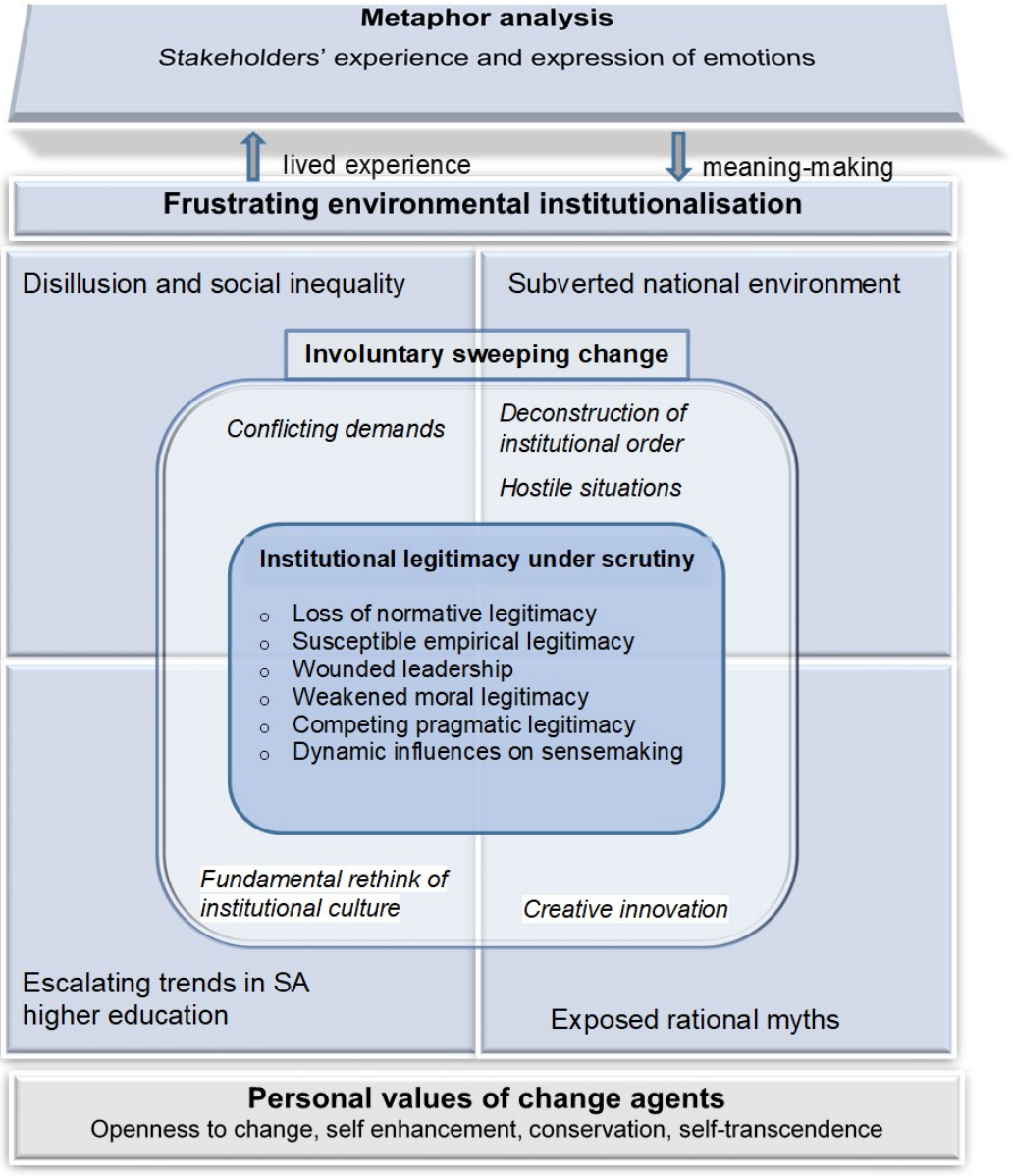


Figure 6-2 Conceptual framework of sense-making of legitimacy during radical change at universities

This framework indicates the different facets of the external environment, the triggers of the sweeping involuntary change as well as the legitimacy demands that came under scrutiny. The

prolonged instability, the multiplicity of issues and the uncertainty evoked emotions from all stakeholders. The framework also indicates how metaphors are used by senior managers to narrate lived experiences and how the analysis of these metaphors contributes to the meaning-making of the events.

The disillusionment and social inequality, the subverted national environment, escalating trends on enrolments and tuitions fees and the questioning of rational myths, contributed to a frustrating institutionalised environment. Upon reaching a tipping point, these frustrations led to period of involuntary and sweeping radical change. The nature and complexity of the demands, the prolonged instability in the sector as well as the need for operational changes, resulted in institutional legitimacy being under scrutiny. The personal values of change agents influenced their responses and managerial responses. To make sense of institutional legitimacy during radical change, it is also important to contextualise the personal values that guide leadership behaviour.

The complexity of the change process was underscored by the findings of the data analysis. The conflicting demands of students and other stakeholders and the deconstruction of institutional order require a fundamental rethink of institutional culture and also stimulated creative innovation. This study has confirmed that sense-making can be applied successfully in creating meaning by applying different theories to a complex radical change process. Sense-making also became a valuable tool to identify the different rational myths that triggered radical change and to explore its impact on the legitimacy of institutions and the ability of senior managers to deal with the radical change. The dynamic discourse analysis of metaphors provided a tool to unpack the emotions of stakeholders before and during the change process. This analysis of the metaphors enabled me to generate a cognitive map of emotions experienced during the phenomenon of the introduction of free higher education as illustrated in figure 6.3.

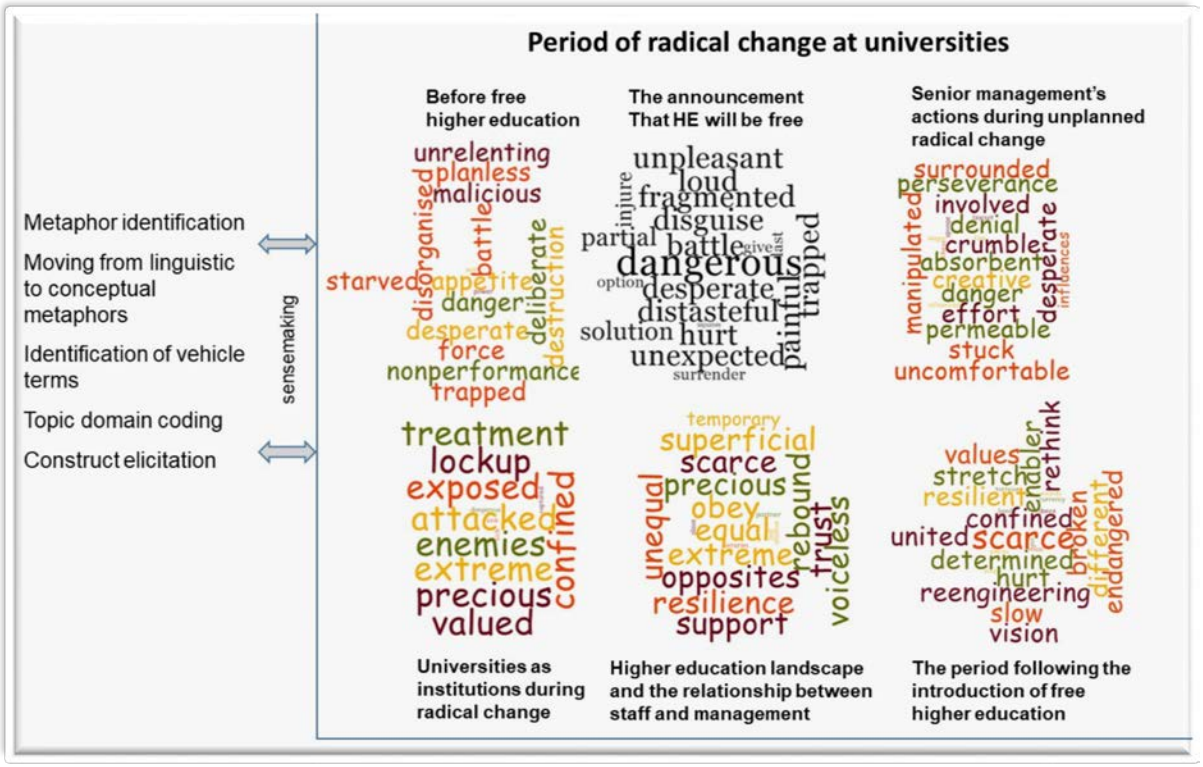


Figure 6-3 A cognitive map of emotions and experiences informing sense-making of legitimacy

In this way, metaphors contribute to the enhancement of sense-making during radical change. The theoretical contribution of combining institutional theory with metaphor analysis can inform the impact of radical change on the legitimacy of institutions and allows for better management of radical change.

Through sense-making, it became clear that radical change erupts in chaos as soon as environmental stability is compromised. The upholding of the law is a prerequisite for parastatal institutions to effectively deal with radical change. The absence of law enforcement forced senior managers to take decisions outside their area of expertise, but also treading on a terrain that is not seen as part of the core business.

Lastly, instability hampered attempts at sense-making and sense-giving during the radical change period. The vice-chancellors with their senior management teams are answerable for the effective functioning of the university and to communicate with various constituencies are part of this responsibility. It is also expected that leaders must be visible. In this period of radical change, the legitimacy judgements of vice-chancellors were questioned from the start. In many

instances, protesting students did not grant vice-chancellors an opportunity to speak and they sometimes had to be escorted off the university premises for their safety. What made the position of the senior management even more complex was the fact that the vice-chancellors were caught between two fires – the government with diminishing state funding and students demanding free higher education.

6.4 Practical implications

Based on the findings of this study, it is my conclusion that the following practical implications for enhancing the legitimacy of institutions during radical change can be considered:

University history and ideology matter during radial change. The more diverse the issues under pressure, the more complex sense-making and maintaining legitimacy become. When the normal business-as-usual operations could not proceed during the radical change period, performance legitimacy came under scrutiny. The lack of legitimacy on a national level forced universities to adopt roles and responsibilities that are not part of their mandate under normal circumstances. Also, decisions are evaluated by what is taken away and not by the potential value that can be added. Henceforth the importance of communication to contextualise decisions is critical.

The media became a tool to drive an agenda rather than a tool to deliver objective reports. Dealing with the varied and changing demands of students contributed to mixed interpretations of events and eventually led to a breakdown in engagement. The use of multiple of information-sharing platforms, ranging from national broadcasts, printed media, social media as well as private Facebook and WhatsApp groups, resulted in aspirational or emulative violent student behaviour (see 5.1.4.2). Furthermore, distrust about the legitimacy of the various stakeholders clouded the dialogues. The need for pro-active communication in a space dominated by the youth, active on social media, became apparent. The absence of pro-active communication allowed other people to interpret events according to their frame of reference.

According to Scott (2004), institutionalisation is a process of instilling value and supplying intrinsic worth to a structure or a process. Institutionalisation is also viewed as a process of creating reality (see 2.1.2). Mezias (1995) has indicated that compliance with regulations will vary as a function of the resources devoted to enforcement. Subsequently, the response of an

organisation to the demands of the external environment will vary depending on which forces are more likely to evoke strategic retorts - such as surveillance and sanctioning (see 2.1.2.1). In the case of higher education, compliance with regulations seems to have become the central determinate of structures and processes (see 3.3.4). This over-reliance on compliance may yield positive results in a country with high levels of normative legitimacy and a flourishing economy. However, in South Africa, with a lack of normative legitimacy and poor socio-economic conditions, the rational myths on which public universities were built since the first democratic election, seem to no longer meet the legitimate demands of a knowledge institution. The #FeesMustFall movement was effectively a call for radical social justice, but unfortunately also became a platform for many smaller groups with particular demands.

6.5 Policy implications

As accountable officers, that have to ensure financial sustainability and being dependant on state funding, university managers have to further engage with the national government. The realisation that fee-free education without sufficient national funding will be unsustainable and cripple most universities in the long run, necessitates a revised funding framework and a sustainable financial support framework for students. Pro-active engagements between government and university leaders should prioritise the long-term sustainability of fee-free education.

The development of a transformation framework, with a focus on the exposed rational myths at universities, will enable universities to monitor transformation actively and in a transparent way. This can prevent a situation where practices are simply accepted because they have become rational myths.

6.6 Limitations of the study

This study focuses on public universities in South Africa. South Africa has its own political, economic, and cultural composition. The findings of the study can be generalised but should be mindful of the aforementioned context.

This study focuses on the perspective of senior managers. The actions of middle management, as well as operational staff, also influenced events during radical change but these were not the

focus of the study. The long-term impact of the implementation of free higher education was not considered as part of this study.

6.7 Conclusion and areas of future research

After an unprecedented wave of student protests that lasted for more than two years, the South African government introduced free public higher education for students with a household income below a predetermined threshold. Sense-making of legitimacy during radical institutional change was explored using the South African road towards the introduction of free higher education.

Further research should be conducted on the long-term impact of fee-free education and the institutionalisation of new rational myths in higher education. A longitudinal study may provide more insight into the transformation of South African universities after the implementation of free higher education. The influence of culture on the sense-making of legitimacy during radical change is an area that deserves exploration in future research.

The importance of a strategy to communicate via multiple communication platforms, became apparent. The inability of senior managers to use social media or to respond to social media usage by other stakeholders was highlighted. A study on the usage and influence of social media during unplanned radical change can assist in understanding the dynamics of change as well as the expectations from stakeholders.

Rational myths pertaining to university management and governance, university autonomy, outsourcing, and the setting of tuition fees were challenged by students and members of society. The aftermath of the radical change process has short-term and long-term consequences and the full scope of the impact will only be visible after some time. This is not the end of the changes taking place at universities, merely the beginning. The implementation of free higher education was accompanied by new rules. Coming out of the crisis, new long-term opportunities emerged. However, the impact of free education on the future legitimacy of public universities in South Africa is still to be determined.

The study contributes to the sense-making of the South African fee protests by exposing the underlying driving forces. It also provides insight into the experiences of senior management in

terms of sense-making and understanding the impact on the legitimacy of higher education institutions during this period of unplanned radical change. This study focuses on the broad cycle of change – starting from the mounting pressure, followed by the student protests and period of disorder, up to the announcement of free higher education and the responses of universities in implementing these changes. The contribution of this paper lies in enhancing the understanding of the sense-making of legitimacy during radical change at universities. The informed analysis of the sense-making of legitimacy during radical institutional change provides insight for future leaders on steering change in a complex environment, coupled with the multifaceted dynamics of highly institutionalised organisations.

REFERENCES

Adelzadeh, A., 2003. *South Africa. Human development report 2003. The challenge of sustainable development in South Africa: Unlocking people's creativity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Agar, M., 2011. Making sense of one other for another: ethnography as translation. *Language and communication*, 31(1), pp. 38-47.

Agnes Ma., and Norwich, B., 2007. Triangulation and theoretical understanding, *International journal of social research methodology*, 10(3), pp. 211-226.

Akhtar, F., Lodhi, S. A. and Khan, S. S., 2016. Assessing the influence of the cultural perspective on cross cultural conflict: an analysis of cultural environment, *Pakistan journal of commerce and social sciences*, 10(1), pp. 84-103.

Allan, E.J., 2010. Feminist poststructuralism meets policy analysis: an overview. In Allan, E.J., Iverson, S.V., and Ropers-Huilman, R., eds. *Reconstructing policy in higher education: feminist poststructural perspectives,* pp. 11-36. New York: Routledge.

Al-Mashari, M. and Zairi, M., 1999. BPR implementation process: an analysis of key success and failure factors. *Business process management journal*, 5(1), pp. 87-112.

Alvesson, M. and Willmott, H., 2001. *Making sense of management*, London: Sage.

Amis, J., Slack, T., and Hinings, C. R., 2004. The pace, sequence, and linearity of radical change. *Academy of management journal,* 47(1), pp. 15–39.

Ancona, D., 2011. Sensemaking: Framing and acting in the unknown. In D. Snook, N. Nohria and R. Khurana, eds. *The handbook for teaching leadership*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Andripoulos, C. and Lowe, A., 2000. Enhancing organisational creativity: the process of perpetual challenging. *Management decision*, 38(10), pp. 734-742.

Angrosino, M., 2011. *Analyzing ethnographic data*. London: Sage.

Appelbaum, M. H., 2014. Intentionality and narrativity in phenomenological psychological research: reflections on Husserl and Ricoeur. *Indo-Pacific journal of phenomenology*, 14(2), pp. 1-19.

Archer, S., 2015. *Free higher education is an inequality engine*. Business Day, 20 October.

Ashkanasy, N,M., Humphrey, R.H. and Huy, Q,N., 2017. Integrating emotions and affect in Theories of management. *Academy of Management Review*, 42(2), pp. 175–189.

Austen, A. and Kapias, M. 2016. Decoupling between policy and practice through the lens of sensemaking and sensegiving. *Management*, 20(1), pp. 225-238.

Baldridge, J.V. 1971. *Power and conflict in the university*, New York: John Wiley.

Balogun, J., Bartunek, J.M. and Do, B., 2015. Senior manager's sensemaking and responses to strategic change. Organization Sciences, 26(4), pp. 960-979.

Barr, N., 2004. Higher education in Australia and Britain: what lesson? The Australian Economic Review, 31(1), pp. 179-188.

Battilana, J., Leca, B. and Boxenbaum, E., 2009. How actors change institutions: towards a theory of institutional entrepreneurship. *Academy of management annals*, 3(1), pp. 65–107.

Bawa, A., 2018. Ever wondered why university vice-chancellors earn millions. Here's why. Capetalk. Available from: http://www.capetalk.co.za/articles/326665 [Accessed 3 May 2019].

Beal, D. J., Trougakkos, J. P., Weiss, H. M. and Green, S. G., 2006. Episodic processes in emotional labor: perceptions of affective delivery and regulation strategies. *Journal of applied psychology*, 91(5), pp. 1053-1065.

Becker, J. and Lissmann, H.J., 1973. *Inhaltsanalyse - Kritik einer sozialwissenschaftlichen Methode. Arbeitspapiere zur politischen Soziologie 5*. München: Olzog.

Behr, A.L., 1984. New perspectives in South African education: a review of education in South Africa (1652–1984), Durban: Butterworth.

Bennett, C.I., 2011. *Comprehensive multicultural education. Theory and practice.* 7th Edition. Boston: Pearson Education.

Berger, L., Bergman, M.M., Bergman, Z., Leisinger, K., Ojo, E., 2014. The influence of context and culture on corporate responsibility expectations in South Africa. *Journal of international business ethics* 7(2), pp. 3-21.

Berger, P. L. and Luckmann, T., 1967. *The social construction of reality*. New York: Doubleday.

Berkes, F., 2009. Evolution of co-management: role of knowledge generation, bridging organizations and social learning. *Journal of environmental management*, 90(5), pp. 1692-1702.

Bessant, J. and Caffyn, S., 1997. High- involvement innovation through continuous improvement, *International journal of technology management*, 14(1), pp. 14-22.

Bhorat, H., Stanwix, B. and Yu, D., 2015. *Nonincome welfare and inclusive growth in South Africa*. Africa growth initiative. University of Cape Town.

Bils, M. and Klenow, P.J., 2000. Does schooling cause growth? *The American economic review*, 90 (5), pp. 1160–1183.

Biazzo, S., 2000. Approaches to business process analysis: a review, *Business process management journal*, 6 (2), pp. 99-112.

Bils, M. and Klenow, P.J., 2000. Does schooling cause growth? *The American economic review*, 90(5), pp. 1160–1183.

Bitektine. A., 2011. Toward a theory of social judgments of organizations: the case of legitimacy, reputation, and status. *Academy of management review*, 36(1), pp. 151–179.

Bond, T., 2003. Validity and Assessment: A Rasch measurement perspective, *Metodologia de las Ciencias del Comportamiento*, 5(2), pp. 179-194.

Boroditsky, L., 2001. Does language shape thought? Mandarin and English speakers' conceptions of time. *Cognitive psychology*, 43(1), pp. 1–22.

Botetzagias, I., and Koutiva, E., 2014. Financial giving of foundations and businesses to environmental NGOs: The role of grantee's legitimacy. *Voluntas: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations, 25*(2), pp. 281–306.

Boucher, M., 1974. The university of the Cape of Good Hope and the university of South Africa, 1873- 1946: *A Study in National and Imperial Perspective*, Archives Yearbook, 35th year, 1972, 1, Pretoria: Government Printer.

Bowen, G.A., 2009. Document analysis as a qualitative research method. *Qualitative research journal*, 9(2), pp. 28-39.

Bowerman, M., 1994. From universal to language-specific in early grammatical development. Philosophical Transactions, *Biological Sciences*, 346(1315), pp. 37–45.

Browne, J., 2010. *Securing a sustainable future for higher education. An independent review of higher education funding and student finance*. Available from: http://www.independent.gov.uk/browne-report [Accessed 7 November 2019].

Bray, M., 2002. The costs and financing of education: trends and policy implications. Series '*Education in Developing Asia*'. Manila: Asian Development Bank, and Hong Kong: Comparative Education Research Centre, The University of Hong Kong.

Buchanan, D. and Huczynski, A., 1997. *Organisational behaviour*, 3rd ed, London: Prentice Hall.

Bunting, I., 2006. The higher education landscape under apartheid, in N. Cloete, P. Maassen, R. Fehnel, T. Moja, H. Perold. and T. Gibbon, eds. *Transformation in higher education: Global pressures and local realities in South Africa*, pp. 35–52, Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Cabal. A.B., 1993. *The university as an institution today*, Paris: UNESCO Publishing.

Cai, Y. and Mehari, Y., 2015. The use of institutional theory in higher education research, *Theory and method in higher education research*, 1, pp. 1-25.

Cameron, L., 2007. Confrontation or complementarity: metaphor in language use and cognitive metaphor theory. *Annual review of cognitive linguistics*, 5, pp. 107-135.

Cameron, L., 2008. Metaphor and talk. In R. W. Gibbs, Jr. ed. *The Cambridge handbook of metaphor and thought*, pp. 197–211. Cambridge University Press.

Cameron, L., and Low, G.D., 1999. Metaphor. *Language teaching,* 32(2), pp. 77-96.

Cameron, L., Maslen, R., Todd, Z., Maule, J., Stratton, P., and Stanley, N., 2009. The discourse dynamics approach to metaphor and metaphor led discourse analysis. *Metaphor and symbol*, 24(2), pp. 63–89.

Campbell, D. T., 1997. From evolutionary epistemology via selection theory to a sociology of scientific validity. *Evolution Cognition,* 3(1), pp. 5–38.

Carroll, A. B., 1979. A three-dimensional conceptual model of corporate performance. *Academy of management review*, 4(4), pp. 497–505.

Cavanaugh, J. C. and Garland, P., 2012. Performance funding in Pennsylvania. *Change: The magazine of higher learning.* Available from: http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/vchn20/current [Accessed 10/02/2017].

Chapman, B. and Ryan, C., 2005. The access implications of income-contingent charges for higher education: lessons from Australia. *Economics of education review*, 24(5), pp. 491–512.

Chalufu, S. 2018. *Reflections on #FeesMustFall in the wake of the passing of Prof Bongani Mayosi.* Available from: https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/opinionista/2018-08-14-reflections-on-feesmustfall-in-the-wake-of-the-passing-of-prof-bongani-mayosi/ [Accessed 31 July 2019].

Chan, Z. Y., Yuen-ling, F., Wai-tong, C. 2013. Bracketing in phenomenology: only undertaken in the data collection and analysis process? *Qualitative report*, 18(30), pp. 1-9.

Chapman, B. and Ryan, C., 2005, The access implications of income related charges for higher education: lessons from Australia. *Economics of education review*, 24(5), pp. 491–512.

Charmaz, K., 2006. Cons*tructing. Grounded Theory*. London: Sage.

CHE, 2004. *South African higher education in the first decade of democracy*. Pretoria: ComPress.

CHE, 2013. *A proposal for undergraduate curriculum reform in South Africa: the case for a flexible curriculum structure. Pretoria.* Available from: http://www.che.ac.za/sites/default/files/ publications /Full_Report.pdf [Accessed 10 January 2020].

CHE, 2016a. *South African higher education reviewed: two decades of democracy*. Pretoria: CHE

CHE, 2016b. Student funding. *Kagisano*, (10)1, pp. 39-115.

Chen, C.Y., 2015. A study showing research has been valued over teaching in higher education. *Journal of the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning*, 15(3), pp. 15 – 32.

Cilesiz, S., 2011. A phenomenological approach to experiences with technology: current state, promise, and future directions for research. *Educational Technology Research and Development.* 59(4), pp. 487-510.

Clark, B. R., 1983. *The higher education system: Academic organization in cross-national perspective*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Cloete, N., 2011. *University World News South Africa: radical new plan for higher education.* Issue No: 200. Available from: http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=2011120222252975 [Accessed 26 February 2018].

Cloete, N., 2015. The flawed ideology of 'free higher education'. *University World News*, 2 November 2015. CHET. Issue 00447.

Cloete, N., Bailey, T., Pillay, P., Bunting, I. and Maassen, P., 2011. *Universities and economic development in Africa: Key findings.* Wynberg: Centre for Higher Education Transformation.

Cobban, A.B., 1991. *The medieval universities: their development and organization*. London, UK: Methuen & Co.

Coffey, A., 2014. Analysing documents. In U. Flick, ed. *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*, London: SAGE Publications Ltd, pp. 367-380.

Cohen, L., Manion, L., and Morrison, K., 2007. *Research methods in education.* New York: Routledge.

Coll, R. K., and Chapman, R., 2000. Choices of methodology for cooperative education researchers. *Asia-Pacific journal of cooperative education,* 1(1), pp. 1-8.

Colville, I., Brown, A. D. and Pye, A., 2012. Simplexity: sensemaking, organizing and storytelling for our time. *Human relations*, 65(1), pp. 5–15.

Corbin, J. and Strauss, A., 2008. *Basics of qualitative research: techniques and procedures for developing grounded theory* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cornelissen, J. P., and Clarke, J. S., 2010. Imagining and rationalizing opportunities: inductive reasoning and the creation and justification of new ventures. *Academy of management review*, 35(4), pp. 539–557.

Cousins, C., 2002. Getting to the "truth": issues in contemporary qualitative research. *Australian journal of adult learning,* 42(2), pp.192-204.

Creswell, J.W., 2007. *Qualitative inquiry and research design: choosing among five approaches,* 2nd ed., Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dagher, R., 2018. Legitimacy and post-conflict state-building: The undervalued role of performance legitimacy. *Conflict, security and development*, 18(1), pp. 85-111.

Dahlberg, K., Dahlberg, H., and Nyström, M., 2008. *Reflective lifeworld research.* Lund, Sweden: Studentlitteratur.

Daniel, E., 1999. Firm-level benefits of radical innovation, *Journal of general management*, 24 (2), pp. 245-277.

Davids, N. and Waghid, Y., 2016. *#FeesMustFall: History of South African student protests reflects inequality's grip*. Available from: https://mg.co.za/article/2016-10-10-feesmustfall-history-of-south-african-student-protests-reflects-inequalitys-grip [Accessed 25 May 2019].

Davies, D. and Dodd, J., 2002. Qualitative research and the question of rigor. *Qualitative Health research,* 12(2), pp. 279-289.

Deephouse, D. L., and Carter, S. M., 2005. An examination of differences between organizational legitimacy and organizational reputation. *Journal of management studies*, *42*(2), pp. 329–360.

De Guerrero, M.C.M., Villamil, O.S., 2002. Metaphorical conceptualizations of ESL teaching and learning. *Language and teaching research,* 6(2), pp. 95-120.

Degn, L., 2015. Identity constructions and sensemaking in higher education – a case study of Danish higher education department heads, *Studies in higher education*, 40 (7), pp. 1179-1193.

Deignan, A., 2003. Combining large and small corpora to investigate tuning devices around metaphor in spoken discourse, *Metaphor and symbol*, 18(3), pp. 149–160.

Denzin, N. K., 1989. *The research act. A theoretical introduction to sociological methods*. 3rd ed. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Denzin, N. K., 2013. The death of data? Cultural Studies. *Critical Methodologies*, 13(4), pp. 353–356.

Dervin, B. 2003., From the mind's eye of the user: The sense-making of qualitative-quantitative methodology. In B. Dervin, L. Foreman-Wenet, and E. Lauterbach, eds. *Sense-making methodology reader: Selected writings of Brenda Dervin*, pp. 269–292. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton.

DHET. 2010. *Ministerial statement on university funding: 2011/12*. December 2010. Available from: http://www.dhet.gov.za [Accessed 23/11/2017].

DHET. 2012. *Ministerial statement on university funding: 2013/14 and 2014/15.* November 2012. Available from: http://www.dhet.gov.za [Accessed 23/11/2017].

DHET, 2013. Department of Higher Education and Training-Republic of South Africa. *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training, Pretoria*.

DHET, 2015a. Higher Education Act, 1997. Act No. 101 of 1997. *The policy on the minimum norms and standards for student housing at public universities*. Government Gazette, 29 September 2015.

DHET, 2015b. *Ministerial statement on university funding.*

DHET, 2017. *Report of the ministerial task team to develop a support and funding model for poor and "missing middle" students*. Available from: www.education.gov.za [Accessed 29/01/2017].

Díez-de-Castro, E., Peris-Ortiz, M., and Díez-Martín, F., 2018. Criteria for evaluating the organizational legitimacy: a typology for legitimacy jungle. In: Díez-De-Castro E., Peris-Ortiz M. eds. *Organizational legitimacy*. Springer, Cham.

DiMaggio, P. J. and Powell, W. W., 1983. The iron cage revisited: institutional isomorphism and collective rationality in organizational fields. *American Sociological Review*, 48(2), pp. 147-160.

DiMaggio, P. J., and Powell, W. W., 1991. *The new institutionalism in organisational analysis*. University of Chicago Press: Chicago.

DoE, 1997. Department of Education. Education *White Paper 3: A Programme for the Transformation of Higher Education*. General Notice 1196 of 1997. Pretoria.

DoE. 2004. *A new funding framework: how government grants are allocated to public higher education institutions*. Available from: http://www.dhet.gov.za [Accessed 23/11/2017].

DoE, 2015. Department of Basic Education. Education *Statistics in South Africa 2014*. www.education.gov.za

Dogan, C., 2017. The importance of multiculturalism in community interpreting. *Journal of business, humanities and technology,* 7(2), pp. 72-77.

Dougherty, D., 1994. Commentary in P. Shrivastava, A. Huff, and J. Dutton, eds. *Advances in Strategic Management,* 10, pp. 107-112. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Drori, I. and Honig, B., 2013. A process model of internal and external legitimacy, *Journal of organization studies*, 34(3), pp. 345–376.

Du, J., 2002. Teaching and research: the time involved of university professors. *Journal of Pingtung Teachers College*, 17, pp. 135-174.

Du Plessis, G. A. and De Bruin, G. P., 2015. Using Rasch modelling to examine the international personality item pool (IPIP) values in action (VIA) measure of character strengths. *Journal of Psychology in Africa*, 25(3), pp. 512-521.

Durkheim, E., 1961. *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life.* New York: Collier.

Elam, C., Stratton, T. and Gibson, D., 2007. Welcoming a new generation to college: the millennial students. *Journal of college admission*, 195(Spring), pp. 20-25.

Elfenbein, H. A., 2007. Emotion in organizations: a review and theoretical integration. *Academy of management annals*, 1(1), pp. 315–386.

Enserink, B., Koppenjan, J.F.M and Mayer, I.S., 2013. A policy sciences view on policy analysis, in W. A. H. Thissen and W. E. Walker, eds. *Public policy analysis, international series in operations research and management science* 179, New York: Springer Science Business Media.

Erfort, O., Erfort, I. and Zbarazskaya, L., 2016. Financing higher education in Ukraine, The binary model versus the diversification model. *International Journal of Educational Development*. 49, pp. 330–335.

Estermann, T. 2017. Why universities autonomy matter more than ever. *University World News*. Available from: http://www.universityworldnews.com/article.php?story=20170404132356742 [Accessed 13 December 2018].

Falck, J.M., 2010. Are metaphorical metaphor paths and roads ever paved? Corpus analysis of real and imagined journeys. *Review of cognitive linguistics*,8(1), pp. 93-122.

Flick, U., 2004. Triangulation in qualitative research. In U. Flick, E. von Kardorff, & I. Steinke, eds. *A companion to qualitative research*, pp. 178–183. London: Sage

Floyd, S. W. and Wooldridge, B., 1992. Middle management involvement in strategy and its association with strategic type: a research note. *Strategic management journal*, 13(1), pp. 153–167.

Ford, C., 2000. Creative developments in creativity theory, *Academy of management review*, 25(2), pp. 284-285.

Fransman, M., 2009. *Minister of Higher Education and Training on progress report in transferring skills development responsibility to the new department and transitional arrangements*. Available from: https://pmg.org.za/committee-meeting/10826/ [Accessed 2/02/2017].

Friedman, B.M., 2005. *The moral consequence of economic growth*. Vintage, New York.

Frijda, N. H., 1996. Passions: emotion and socially consequential behavior. In R. D. Kavanaugh, B. Zimmerberg and S. Fein, eds. *Emotions: Interdisciplinary perspectives*, pp. 1–27. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Furst, S. A. and Cable, D. M., 2008. Employee resistance to organizational change: managerial influence tactics and leader–member exchange. *Journal of applied psychology,* 93(2), pp. 453–462.

Gachie, W., 2017. Project risk management: a review of an institutional project life cycle. *Risk governance & control: financial markets & institutions*, 7(4), pp. 163-173.

Galea, S., Fried, L. P., Walker, J.R., Rudenstine, S., Glover, J.W., Begg, M.D., 2015. Developing the New Columbia core curriculum: a case study in managing radical curriculum change, *American journal of public health supplement,* 105(1), pp. 17-21

Genzuk, M., 2003. A synthesis of ethnographic research. Occasional papers series. Center for multilingual, multicultural research, eds. *Center for Multilingual, Multicultural Research, Rossier School of Education*, University of Southern California. Los Angeles.

Géring, Z., 2015. Content analysis versus discourse analysis: Examination of corporate social responsibility in companies' homepage texts. *SAGE Research Methods Cases*. London: SAGE Publications.

Gibson, D.E., 2010. Anger in organizations: review and integration. *Journal of management*, 36(1), pp. 66-93

Gioia, D.A. and Chittipeddi, K., 1991. Sensemaking and sensegiving in strategic change initiation. *Strategic management journal*, 12(6), pp. 433-448.

Gioia, D., 1986. Symbols, scripts and sensemaking: creating meaning in the organizational experience.In: P. Sims and D. Gioia, eds. *The Thinking Organization*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, pp. 49–74.

Giorgi, A., and Giorgi, B., 2003. The descriptive phenomenological psychological method. In P. M. Camic, J. E. Rhodes, and Yardley, eds. *Qualitative research in psychology: Expanding perspectives in methodology and design,* pp. 243-273. Washington, DC, US: American Psychological Association.

Glenberg, A. M. and Kaschak, M. P., 2002. Grounding language in action. *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review*, 9(3), pp. 558–565.

Glenn, I., 2016. *Standing up for injustices? – Nine notes on #FeesMustFall*, Litnet. Available from: https://www.litnet.co.za/standing-injustices-nine-notes-feesmustfall/ [Accessed 2 September 2018].

Gobo, G., 2011. *What is ethnography in doing ethnography*. London: SAGE Publications.

Golafshani, N., 2003. Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, *8*(4), pp. 597-606.

Gonzalez, J. M., 2008. An exploration of the sensemaking process during the implementation of academic tracking systems at three public universities. *Graduate Theses and Dissertations.* Available from: https://scholarcommons.usf.edu/etd/264 [Accessed 30 November 2019].

Goodman, P., 1962. *The Community of Scholars*. New York: Random House.

Gouveia, V. V., Santos, W. S., Milfont, T. L., Fischer, R., Clemente, M., and Espinosa, P., 2010. Teoría funcionalista de los valores humanos en España: comprobación de las hipótesis de

contenido yestructura. Revista Interamericana de Psicologia/Interamerican, *Journal of Psychology*, 44(2), pp. 203-214.

Greenwood, R. and Hinings, C.R., 1996. Understanding radical organizational change: bringing together the old and the new institutionalism. *The Academy of Management Review*, 21(4), pp.1022-1054.

Gunew, S., 2004. *Colonial hauntings: the colonial seeds of multiculturalism in haunted nations: the colonial dimensions of multiculturalisms*. New York: Routledge.

Gurteen, D., 1998. Knowledge, creativity and innovation, *Journal of knowledge management*, 2(1), pp. 5-13.

Hall, P. A. and Taylor, R. C. R., 1996. Political science and the three new institutionalisms, *Political studies*, 44(5), pp. 936-957.

Halldorsdottir, S., 2000. The Vancouver school of doing phenomenology. In B. Fridlund and C. Hildingh, eds. *Qualitative Research Methods in the Service of Health* . Studentlitteratur, Lund, pp. 47–81.

Han, S. K., 1994. Mimetic isomorphism and its effects on the audit services market. *Social forces*, 73(2), pp. 637–663.

Hardy, C. and Maguire, S., 2008. Institutional entrepreneurship. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, K. Sahlin and R. Suddaby, eds. *The SAGE handbook of organizational institutionalism.* London: Sage.

Harnisch, T., 2011. *Performance-based funding: A re-emerging strategy in public higher education financing.* Washington, DC: American Association of State Colleges and Universities.

Harrington, B., 2003. The social psychology of access in ethnographic research. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, 32(5), pp. 592–625.

Hay, C., 2014. Neither real nor fictitious but ‘as if real'? A political ontology of the state, *British Journal of Sociology*, 65 (3), pp. 459-480

Healy, M. and Perry, C., 2000. Comprehensive criteria to judge validity and reliability of qualitative research within the realism paradigm. *Qualitative market research*, 3(3), pp. 118-126.

Heap, J., 1989. *The Management of Innovation and Design*, London: Cassell.

HEFCE, 2013. Higher Education Funding Council for England. How should we measure higher education? A fundamental review of the Performance Indicators. November 2013.

Heher, J.J.A., Ally, G. and Khumalo, L., 2017. *Report of the commission of enquiry into higher education and training to the president of the Republic of South Africa*. Available from: http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/sites/default/files/CommissionofInquiryintoHigherEducation Report.pdf [Accessed 1 June 2019].

Heidegger, M., 1976. Gesamtausgabe. II Abteilung: Vorlesungen 1923-1944. Band 21. Logik. Die Frage nach der Wahrheit, Vittorio Klostermann, Frankfurt am Main.

Heidegger, M., 1998. *Being and time* (J. Stambaugh, Trans.). Albany, NY: State University of New York Press (Original work published in 1927).

Heifetz, R., Grashow, A. and Linsky, M., 2009. *The practice of adaptive leadership: Tools and tactics for changing your organization.* Boston: MA: Harvard Business Press.

Hilton, M., Jacobson, R. 2012. A Lesson of lost political capital in public higher education: Leadership challenges in a time of needed organizational change, 5(3), pp. 227-232.

Hinsch, W., 2010. Justice, legitimacy, and constitutional rights, *Critical review of international social and political philosophy*, 13(1): pp. 39-54.

Hough, M., Jackson, J. and Bradford, B., 2013. Legitimacy, trust and compliance: an empirical test of procedural justice theory using the European social survey', in Tankebe, J. and Liebling, A. eds. *Legitimacy and Criminal Justice: An International Exploration*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Hsieh, H., Shannon, S.E., 2005. Three approaches to qualitative content analysis, *Qualitative health research*, 15 (9), pp. 1277-1288

Hurlbut, W.B. Ed. 2018. *Overcoming poverty and inequality in South Africa. An Assessment of Drivers, Constraints and Opportunities*. March 2018. Gauteng, South Africa: Shereno Printers.

Husen, T., 1991. The idea of a university: changing roles, current crisis and future challenges. *Prospects*, 21(2), pp. 171-188.

Husserl, E., 1962. *Ideas: General introduction to pure phenomenology* (Translated by W. R. Boyce Gibson). London, UK: Collier Books (Original work published in 1913).

Husserl, E. 2002. Pure phenomenology, its method, and its field of investigation. In D. Moran and T. Mooney, eds. *The phenomenology reader,* pp. 124-33. New York, NY: Routledge.

Husserl, E., 1990. *The idea of phenomenology.* Translated by William Alston and George Nakhnikian. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Huy, Q. N., 2002. Emotional balancing of organizational continuity and radical change: the contribution of middle managers. *Administrative science quarterly*, 47(1), pp. 31–69.

Huy, Q.N., Corley, K.G. and Kraatz, M.S., 2014. From support to mutiny: Shifting legitimacy judgments and emotional reactions impacting the implementation of radical change. *Academy of Management journal*, 57(6), pp. 1650-1660.

Immergut, E. M. 2005. Paradigms of change in political science: historical-institutionalism and the problem of change. In A. Wimmer and R. Kößler, eds. *Understanding Change: Models, Methodologies and Metaphors*, pp. 237-259. Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave/Macmillan.

Jansen, J., 2000. *Education beyond apartheid: intersections of politics and polity in the South African transition*, 1990–2000. University of Durban-Westville, South Africa.

Jansen, J., 2017(a). *Matric exams are easy – and mean very little*. BusinessTech. Available from: https://businesstech.co.za/news/lifestyle/148933 [Accessed 22/02/2017].

Jansen, J., 2017(b). *As by fire. The end of the South African University*. Cape Town: Tafelberg Uitgewers.

Jarvis, L. C., 2017. Feigned versus felt: feigning behaviors and the dynamics of institutional logics. *Academy of Management Review*, 42(2), pp. 306–333.

Jasanoff, S. 1990. *The fifth branch. Science advisors as policymakers*. Harvard: Cambridge.

Jennings, P. D., R. and Greenwood., 2003. Constructing the iron cage: institutional theory and enactment. R. Westwood, S. Clegg, eds. *Debating Organization: Point-Counterpoint in Organization Studies*. Blackwell, Malden, MA, pp. 195–207.

Jepperson, R.L., 1991. Institutions, institutional effects, and institutionalism. In W.W. Powell and P.J. DiMaggio, eds. *The new institutionalism in organizational analysis*, pp. 143-163. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Lee, C.Y. 2010. A theory of firm growth.

Jongbloed, B., 2010. *Funding higher education, a view across Europe*. Available from: www.highereducationmanagement.eu [Accessed 1 December 2017].

Kanter, R. M., 1983. *The change masters.* New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.

Kemper, E.A., Stringfield, S. and Teddlie, C., 2003. Mixed methods sampling strategies in social science research. In: Tashakkori, A. and Teddlie, C., eds., Handbook of mixed methods in social and behavioral research, Sage, Thousand Oaks, pp. 273-296

Keyes, C.L.M., Hysom, S.J., and Lupo, K.L., 2000. The positive organization: leadership legitimacy, employee well-Being, and the bottom Line. *The psychologist-manager journal*, 4(2), pp. 143-153.

Khan, A.S., 2018. Institutions and sensemaking of change: institutional frame switching as sensemaking of microfinance in a Pakistani commercial bank. *Journal of organizational change management*, 31(3), pp. 532-556.

Khinda, N., 2014. CAUS. Council of Alberta university students. *Funding frameworks. Understanding the methods used to finance post-secondary education in Canada.* Available from http://www.oecd.org/education/policy-outlook/ [Assessed 20 January 2020].

Kivunja, C. and Kuyini, A.B., 2017. Understanding and applying research paradigms in educational contexts. *International journal of higher education*, 6(5), pp 26-41.

Klein, G., Moon, B. and Hoffman, R. R., 2006. Making sense of sensemaking 1: alternative perspectives. *IEEE Intelligent Systems*, 21(4), pp. 70–73.

Kolakowski, L., 1972. *Positivist science.* Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books.

Kokko, S., Lagerkvist, C.J. 2017. Using Zaltman Metaphor elicitation technique to map beneficiaries' experiences and values: a case example from the sanitation sector, *American journal of evaluation*, 38(2), pp. 205-225.

Kotter, J., 1995. Leading change: why transformation efforts fail. *Harvard Business Review*, 73(2), pp. 59–67.

Kövecss, Z., 2005. *Metaphor and Culture*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Kozleski, E.B., 2017. The uses of qualitative research: powerful methods to inform evidence-based practice in education. *Research and practice for persons with severe disabilities*, 42(1), pp.19–32.

KPMG., 2016. *Succeeding in disruptive times*. Available from: https://home.kpmg.com/content/ dam/kpmg/ph/pdf/ ThoughtLeadershipPublications [Accessed 17 December 2017].

Kramsch, C., 2003. Metaphor and the subjective construction of belief. In: Kalaja, P., Barcelos, A.M.F. eds. *Beliefs about SLA: New Research Approaches*. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publisher, Dordrecht, pp. 109-128.

Krippendorff, K., 1980. *Content analysis. An Introduction to its Methodology*. Beverly Hills: Sage.

Lakoff, G., and Johnson, M., 1999. *Philosophy in the flesh: The embodied mind and its challenge to western thought.* New York: Basic Books.

Lakoff, G., and Johnson, M. 2003. *Metaphors we live by* (2nd ed.). Chicago, IL and London, UK: The Chicago University Press.

Landau, M. J., Meier, B. P., and Keefer, L. A., 2010. A metaphor-enriched social cognition. *Psychological Bulletin*, 136(6), pp. 1045–1067

Langa, M., ed, 2017. *#Hashtag: An analysis of the #FeesMustFall movement at South African universities.* Available from: https://www.csvr.org.za/pdf/An-analysis-of-the-FeesMustFall-Movement-at-South-African-universities.pdf [Accessed 25 May 2019].

Langdridge, D., 2008. Phenomenology and critical social psychology: directions and debates in theory and research, *Social and personality psychology compass,* 2(3), pp. 1126–1142.

Lant, T. K., 2002. Organizational cognition and interpretation. J. A. C. Baum, ed. *The Blackwell Companion to Organizations*. Blackwell, Oxford, UK, 344–362.

Laroche, H., 1995. From decision to action in organizations: decision-making as a social representation. *Organisational Science,* 6(1), pp. 62–75.

Lazarus, R. S., 1991. *Emotion and adaptation.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Lefa, B.J., 2014. History of Higher Education in South African. History of Education. Unpublished paper. Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

Lepsius, M.R., 2017. *Max Weber and Institutional Theory*. Heidelberg: Springer.

Lester, S., 1999. *An introduction to phenomenological research*. Stan Lester Developments, Taunton. Available from: http://www.sld.demon.co.uk/resmethy.pdf [Accessed 23 September 2019].

Lewis, J., 2010. Education stakeholders welcome department split. *South African Government News Agency.* Available from: http://www.sanews.gov.za/south-africa/education-stakeholders-welcome-department-split [Accessed 14/02/2017].

Li, H.G., Chen, Z.W. and Ma, G.X., 2016., Corporate Reputation and Performance: A Legitimacy Perspective. *Entrepreneurial Business and Economics Review,* 4(3), pp. 181-193.

Lieberman, P., 2003. *Motor control, speech, and the evolution of human language.* New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Lieberman, M. B., and Asaba, S., 2006. Why do firms imitate each other? *Academy of Management Review*, 31(2), pp. 366-385.

Lincoln, Y. S., and Guba, E. G., 1985. *Naturalistic inquiry*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Linden, M., 2017. *Narrating the 2015 Fees Must Fall movement: explanations, contestations, and forms of meaning-making in the public sphere.* Master Dissertation. University of Pretoria, Faculty of Humanities

Lounsbury, M. and Crumley, E. T., 2007. New practice creation: an institutional perspective on innovation. *Organization Studies*, 28(7) pp. 993–1012.

Luescher, T.M., 2016. Frantz Fanon and the #MustFall Movements in South Africa. *International Higher Education*, 28, Spring, pp. 22-24.

Mackenzie, N. and Knipe, S., 2006. Research dilemmas: paradigms, methods and methodology. *Issues in Educational Research,* 16(2), pp. 193-205.

MacLean T.M. and Behnam M., 2010. The dangers of decoupling: The relationship between compliance programs, legitimacy perceptions, and institutionalized misconduct, *Academy of management journal*, 53(6). pp. 1499-1520.

Maitlis, S. and Christianson, M., 2014. Sensemaking in organizations: taking stock and moving forward. *The Academy of Management Annals,* 8 (1), pp. 57–125.

Malsch, B., Tremblay, M. S., and Gendron, Y., 2012. Sense-making in compensation committees: A cultural theory perspective. *Organization Studies*, 33(3), pp. 389–421.

March, J. G. and Olsen, J. P., 2006. Elaborating the new institutionalism, in R. A. W. Rhodes, S. A. Binder and B. Rockman, eds. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Institutions*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 3–20.

Marshall, S., 2016. Quality as sense-making, *Quality in Higher Education*, 22(3), pp. 213-227.

Matta, N.F. and Ashkenas, R.N., 2003. Why good projects fail anyway. Sept 2003. *Harvard Business Review*. Available from: https://hbr.org/2003/09/why-good-projects-fail-anyway [Accessed 4 September 2018].

Maxwell, J.A., 2016. *Designing a qualitative study*. In: The SAGE Handbook of Applied Social Research Methods, London: Thousand Oaks.

McIntyre, R., and Smith, D. W., 1989. Theory of intentionality. In J. N. Mohanty, and W. R. McKenna, eds. *Husserl's phenomenology: A textbook*, pp. 147-179. Washington, DC: Center for Advanced Research in Phenomenology and University Press of America.

McMahon,W., 2009. *Higher learning greater good*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

McNamara, L.A., 2015. *Sensemaking in organizations: reflections on Karl Weick and social theory.* Available from: https://www.epicpeople.org/sensemaking-in-organizations/ [Accessed 26 May 2019].

Menges, J. and Kilduff, M., 2015. Group emotions: cutting the gordian knots concerning terms, levels of analysis, and processes. *Academy of Management Annals*, 9(1), pp. 845–928.

Messick, S., 1989. Validity. In R. L. Linn, ed. *Educational measurement* (3rd ed., pp. 13-104). New York, NY: American Council on education and Macmillan.

Meyer, H., and Rowan, B., 2006. *The new institutionalism in education*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Meyer, J. W. and Rowan, B., 1977. Institutional organizations: Formal structure as myth and ceremony. *American Journal of Sociology,* 83(2), pp. 340-363.

Meyer, J. W., Scott, W.R. and Deal, T.E., 1981. Institutional and technical sources of organizational structure: Explaining the structure of educational organizations. In Herman D. Stein, ed. *Organization and the Human Services: Cross-Disciplinary Reflections*, pp. 151-179. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.

Mezias, S.J., 1995. Using institutional theory to understand for-profit sectors: the case of financial reporting standards. In *The Institutional Construction of Organizations: International and Longitudinal Studies,* 164-96, W. Richard Scott and Søren Christensen, ed. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Milazi, A., 2012. *Is South Africa a multicultural nation, or just a nation with many cultures*? Available from: https://www.timeslive.co.za/ideas/2012-02-24-is-south-africa-a-multicultural-nation-or-just-a-nation-with-many-cultures/ [Accessed 19 July 2019].

Miller, D. and Friesen, P, H., 1984. *Organizations:* A *quantum view*. Englewood Cliifs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Mills, J. H., 2003. *Making sense of organizational change*. London, UK: Routledge.

Ministry of Education, 2001. *National Plan for Higher Education* (Government Notice No. 230) South Africa. Official Gazette, 2001-03-09, 429(22138), pp. 3-91.

Ministry of Education, 2004. *A new funding framework, how government grants are allocated to public higher education Institutions*. February 2004.

Minkov, M., 2009. Predictors of differences in subjective well-being across 97 nations. *Cross-cultural research,* 43(2), pp. 152-179.

Mintzberg, H., 1980. Structures in 5's. A synthesis of the research in organisational design. *Management Science,* 26(3), pp. 322-341.

Moran, D., 2000. *Introduction to phenomenology*. New York, NY: Routledge.

Morphew, C.C., and Huisman, J., 2002. Using institutional theory to reframe research on academic drift. *Higher Education in Europe,* 28(4), pp. 491-506.

Moustakas, C., 1994. *Phenomenological research methods*. London: Sage.

Moyers, P., 2017. *Incremental versus radical change in higher education.* Available from: https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/incremental-versus-radical-change-higher-education-penelope-moyers/ [Accessed 3 December 2019].

Murithi, T., 2006. Practical peacemaking wisdom from Africa: Reflections on Ubuntu. *The Journal of Pan African Studies,* 1(4), pp. 25-34.

Musselin, C., 2006. Are Universities specific organisations? in Krücken G., Kosmützky A. et Torka M. eds. *Towards a Multiversity? Universities between Global Trends and national Traditions*, Bielefeld, Transcript Verlag, pp. 63-84.

Niselow, T., 2019. *Higher education funding model is unsustainable - World Bank*. Available from: https://www.fin24.com/Economy/higher-education-funding-model-is-unsustainable-world-bank-20190122 [Accessed 25 May 2019].

Nohria, N., and Ghoshal, S., 1997. *The Differentiated Network*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

NPC, 2012. National Planning Commission. *National Development Plan 2030. Our future – make it work. Executive Summary*. Available from: http://www.npconline.co.za/MediaLib/Downloads/ Downloads/ExecutiveSummary-NDP2030 -Ourfuture-makeitwork.pdf [Accessed 15 July 2019].

Ntuen, C.A., 2009. Sensemaking as a naturalistic knowledge discovery model. *Proceedings of the 9th international conference on naturalistic decision making*, London, UK: British Computer Society.

Nureev, R., 2005. The evolution of institutional theory and its structure, In: *The institutional economics of Russia's transformation*, Oleinik, A.N., ed. London: Routledge.

Odiambo, N., and Ntenga. L., 2013. Financing research in higher education, *Chapter 11 in Financial and Fiscal Commission (2013).* 2014/15 Submission for the Division of Revenue Technical Report, Midrand, South Africa.

OECD, 2015. *OECD Review of agricultural policies: Switzerland 2015*, OECD, Paris.

OECD, 2016. *Education at a glance*. 2016 OECD indicators, OECD publishing, Paris. Available from: http://dx.dci.org/10.187/eag-2016-en [Accessed 13/02/2017].

Oelofse, E., 2007. *Core and peripheral cultural values and their relationship to transformational leadership: attributes of South African managers*. Philosophiae Doctor (Psychology) Thesis. Available from: https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/24724/00front.pdf? sequence=1&isAllowed=y [Accessed 15 November 2019].

Parker, D., 2016. *Higher education funding challenges and the call for free education*. Presentation at CHE. Colloquium on Funding on 3 December 2015.

Patten, D., M., 1992. Intra-industry environmental disclosures in response to the Alaskan oil spill: A note on legitimacy theory. *Accounting, Organizations and Society,* 17(5), pp. 471–475.

Patton, M. Q., 2002. *Qualitative evaluation and research methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, Inc.

Pavlyutkin, I., 2014. University merger and sensemaking at the threshold: understanding radical organizational change in higher education. Working papers series: education. WP BRP 16/EDU/2014.

Petty, R. E, Briñol, P., Loersch, C. and McCaslin, M. J., 2009. The need for cognition. In M. R. Leary and R. H. Hoyle, eds. *Handbook of individual differences in social behaviour,* pp. 318–329. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Pfeffer, J. and Salancik, C. R., 1978. *The external control of organizations: A resource dependence perspective*. New York: Harper & Row.

Pillay, P., 2011. *Higher education and economic development: literature review*. Wynberg: Centre for Higher Education Transformation (CHET).

Pirolli, P. and Card, S. K., 1999. Information foraging. *Journal of Psychological Review*, 106, pp. 643-675.

Pirolli, P. and Russell, D.M., 2011. Introduction to this special issue on sensemaking, *Human–computer interaction*, 26 (2), pp. 1-8.

Powell, W. and Colyvas, J., 2008. Microfoundations of institutional theory. In R. Greenwood, C. Oliver, K. Sahlin and R. Suddaby, eds. *The Sage handbook of organizational institutionalism*, pp. 276–298. London & Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Pragglejaz group, 2007. MIP: A method for identifying metaphorically-used words in discourse. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 22(1). pp. 1-39.

Ramirez, F. O. and Christensen, T., 2013. The formalization of the university: Rules, roots and routes, *Higher Education*, 65 (6), pp. 695–708.

Rashdall, H., 1936. *The Universities of Europe in the middle ages*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Reeves, S., Kuper, A. and Hodges, B. D., 2008. Qualitative research methodologies: ethnography. *British Medical Journal*, 337, pp. 512–514.

Reimer, D., and Jacob, M., 2011. Differentiation in higher education and its consequences for social inequality: introduction to a special issue, *Higher Education*, 61(3), pp. 223–227.

Rensburg, R., 1993. Societal vs. organizational culture, toward a cross-cultural communication model for South African organizations, *Intercultural communication studies*, 3(1), pp 75-89.

Reus-Smit, C., 2007. International crises of legitimacy. *International politics*, 44(2–3), pp. 157–174.

Rhodes, R. A. W., 2009. Old institutionalism: an overview, in Goodin, R.C., ed. *The Oxford Handbook of Political Science*. Oxford and New York, NY: Oxford University.

Riad, S., 2011. Terms of engagement: on the differential effects of metaphoric utterances in relational stories of organization. *Culture and Organization*, 17(5), pp. 373–388.

Rockmore, T., 2011. *Kant and phenomenology*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Romanelli, E. and Tushman, M. L., 1994. Organizational transformation as punctuated equilibrium: an empirical test. *Academy of Management Journal*, 37(5), pp. 1141–1166.

Roper, J.M. and Shapira, J., 2000. *Ethnography in nursing research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage

Rothman, N. B. and Melwani, S., 2017. Feeling mixed, ambivalent, and in flux: the social functions of emotional complexity for leaders. *Academy of Management Review*, 42(2), pp. 259–282.

Roulston, K., 2014. Analysing interviews, *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis*. London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Ruben, B. D., Immordino, K. M., and Tromp, S. A., 2009. Applying business insight and strategy within the Academy: An idea whose time has come. In J. C. Knapp and D. J. Siegel, eds. *The Business of Higher Education,* pp. 225-263. Santa Barbara, CA: Praeger.

Ruef, M., and Scott, W. R., 1998. A multidimensional model of organizational legitimacy: Hospital survival in changing institutional environments. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 43(4), pp. 877–904.

Rutherford, A. and Rabovsky, T., 2014. Evaluating impacts of performance funding policies on student outcomes in higher education. *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, 655(1), pp. 185-208.

Sandiford, P.J., 2015. Participant Observation as Ethnography or Ethnography as Participant Observation in Organizational Research. In K.D. Strang, ed. *The Palgrave Handbook of Research Design in Business and Management,* pp. 411- 446, New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Sangasubana, N., 2011. How to conduct ethnographic research, *The qualitative report*, 16(2), pp. 567-573.

Saunders, S., 2000. *Vice-Chancellor on a tightrope. A personal account of climactic years in South Africa.* Cape Town: David Philip Publishers.

Schofer, E., and Meyer, J. W., 2005. The worldwide expansion of higher education in the twentieth century. *American Sociological Review*, 70(6), pp. 898–920.

Schreier, M., 2014. Qualitative content analysis in *The SAGE Handbook of Qualitative Data Analysis.* London: SAGE Publications Ltd.

Schein, E.H. 2010. *Organizational culture and Leadership*, Hoboken, New Jersey : John Wiley and Sons.

Schwartz, S. H., 1992. Universals in the content and structure of values: theoretical advance and empirical tests in 20 countries. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 25, pp.1-65.

Scott, W.R., 1987. The adolescence of institutional theory. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 32(4), pp. 493-511.

Scott, P., 1997. The changing role of the university in the production of new knowledge. *Tertiary education and management*, 3 (1), pp. 5–14.

Scott, W. R., 2004. Institutional theory: contributing to a theoretical research program. In K. G. Smith, and M. A. Hitt, eds. *Great minds in management: The process of theory development*, pp. 460-484. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Scott. D., and Usher, R. 2004. *Researching education: data, methods, and theory in educational enquiry*. New York:Continuum.

Scott, G., Grebennikov, L. and Johnston, K., 2007. Study of Australian multi-campus universities. *Journal of Institutional Research*, 13(1), pp. 1-23.

Scott, W. R. and Meyer, J.W., 1983. The organization of societal sectors. In John W. Meyer and W. Richard Scott, *Organizational Environments: Ritual and Rationality*, pp. 129-153. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Seale, C., 1999. *The quality of qualitative research,* Oxford: Blackwell.

Seekings, J., 2008. The continuing salience of race: discrimination and diversity in South Africa. *Journal of Contemporary African Studies*, 26(1), pp. 1–25.

Selznick, P. 1996, Institutionalism "old" and "new", *Administrative science quarterly*, 41(2), pp. 270-277.

Seo, M. and Creed, W.E.D., 2002. Institutional contradictions, praxis, and institutional change: a dialectical perspective. *The academy of management review*, 27(2), pp. 222-247.

Shagrir, L., 2017. *Journey to ethnographic research*. Switzerland: Springer.

Sidani, S. and Sechrest, L., 1996. *Analysis and use of qualitative data*. NIDA Research Monograph, No. 166. Available from http://www.drugabuse.gov/pdf/monographs/ monograph166/292_309.pdf. [Accessed 19 December 2018].

Siyabonga, K., 2015. Student protesters lay siege to police station. *The Star*, 21 October: 4.

Smith, E. R., Seger, C. R. and Mackie, D. A., 2007. Can emotions be truly group level? Evidence regarding four conceptual criteria. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 93(3), pp. 431–446.

Schmitt, R., 2005. Systematic metaphor analysis as a method of qualitative research. The qualitative report, 10(2), pp. 358-394.

Sokolowski, R., 2000. *Introduction to phenomenology*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Soule, K. E., and Freeman, M., 2019. So you want to do post-intentional phenomenological research, *The qualitative report*, 24(4), pp. 857-872.

St. Pierre, E. A., 2013. The posts continue: becoming. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 26(6): pp, 646–657.

Stanley, L., and Wise,S., 1993. *Breaking out again*. London: Routledge

Statistics South Africa, 2011. Census 2011. Available from: https://www.statssa.gov.za/publications/P03014/P030142011.pdf [Accessed 25 July 2019].

Stenbacka, C., 2001. Qualitative research requires quality concepts of its own. *Management decision*, 39 (7), pp. 551-555.

Steinmo, S. and Thelen, K., 1998. Historical institutionalism in comparative politics. In: Steinmo S, Thelen K, Longstreth F (eds) *Structuring politics: historical institutionalism in comparative analysis.* Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 1–32.

Stinchcombe, A.L., 1997, On the virtues of the old institutionalism, *Annual review of Sociology*, 23, pp. 1-18.

Stone-Romero, E.F., Stone, D.L., Salas, E., 2003. The influence of culture on role conceptions and role behavior in Organisations. *Applied Psychology: an international review*, 52 (3), pp. 328–362.

Streeck, W. and Thelen, K. Eds, 2005. *Beyond continuity: institutional change in advanced political economies*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Strydom, B., 2016. South African university history: a historiographical overview. *African Historical Review,* 48(1), pp. 56-82.

Suchman, M. C., 1995. Managing legitimacy: Strategic and institutional approaches. *Academy of Management Review,* 20(3), pp. 571–610.

Tahit, T. 2010. The irresistible rise of academic bureaucracy. *The Guardian*. Available from: https://www.theguardian.com/education/2010/mar/30 [Accessed 9 December 2017].

Taylor, J. and Van Every, E., 2000. *The emergent organization: communication as its site and surface*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Laurence Ehrlbaum.

Temple, J., 2000. *Growth effects of education and social capital in the OECD countries*. Paris: OECD.

Thelen, K., 1999. Historical institutionalism in comparative politics, *Annual review of political science,* 2, pp. 374-77.

Thornton, P.H., 2004. *Markets from culture: Institutional logics and organisational decisions in higher education publishing*. California: Stanford Press.

Tilling, M., 2004. Communication at the edge: voluntary social and environmental reporting in the annual report of a legitimacy threatened corporation. *APIRA Conference Proceedings*, Singapore, July.

Tolbert, P. S., 1997. Institutionalization and structuration: studying the links between action and institution, *Organization studies*, 18 (1), pp. 93-117.

Tost, L. P., 2011. An integrative model of legitimacy judgments. *Academy of Management Review,* 36 (4), pp. 686–710.

Tracy, S. J., 2010. Qualitative quality: eight "big-tent" criteria for excellent qualitative research. *Qualitative inquiry,* 16(10), pp. 837-851.

Tushman, M. L. and Romanelli, E., 1985, Organizational evolution: A metamorphosis model of convergence and reorientation. Jn L. L. Cummings and B. M, Staw, eds. *Research in organizational behaviour,* 7, pp. 171-222. Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Tyler, T. R., 2006. Psychological perspectives on legitimacy and legitimation. *Annual Review of Psychology,* 57, pp. 375–400.

USAF, 2016. Universities South Africa. *Annual Report 2016*. Available from: http://www.usaf.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/USAf-Annual-Report-2016.pdf [Accessed 26 January 2020].

USAF, 2019. There are many ways of remaking a university but they all relate to the society in which it exists. National higher education conference: reinventing South Africa's universities of the future. Available from: https://www.newssite.co.za /usaf/university-society.html [Accessed 19 November 2019].

Utterback, J. M., 1994. *Mastering the dynamics of innovation*. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business School Press.

Vagle, M. D., 2014. *Crafting phenomenological research*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.

Valchev, V. H., Van de Vijver, F. J. R., Nel, J. A., Rothmann, S., and Meiring, D. 2013. The use of traits and contextual information in free personality descriptions across ethnocultural groups in South Africa. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 104 (6), pp. 1077–1091.

Vuori, T. O. and Huy, Q. N., 2016. Distributed attention and shared emotions in the innovation process: How Nokia lost the smartphone battle. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 61: pp. 9–51.

Walker, H. A., and Zelditch, M., Jr., 1993. Power, legitimacy, and the stability of authority: A theoretical research program. In J. Berger and M. Zelditch, Jr., eds. *Theoretical research programs: Studies in the growth of theory*, pp. 364-381. Palo Alto, CA: Stanford University Press.

Watt, D., 2007. On becoming a qualitative researcher: the value of reflexivity. *The qualitative report*, 12(1), pp. 82-101.

Watts, T. and Mead, A., 2005. Using institutional theory to develop a conceptual framework for benchmarking. 5th Annual Hawaii International Conference on Business 2005 Conference proceedings (pp. 3315-3331) *Hawaii International Conference on Business*.

Weber, M., 1978. *Economy and society, an outline of interpretive sociology*, Roth, G., and Wittich, C. (Ed). Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Weber, K., Glynn, M. A., 2006. Making sense with institutions: context, thought and action in Karl Weick's theory. *Organization Studies*, 27(11), pp. 1639–1660.

Weingarten, H.P., and Deller, F., 2019. The benefits of greater differentiation of Ontario's university sector. Higher Education Quality Council of Ontario (HEQCO). Available from: http://www.heqco.ca/SiteCollectionDocuments/DifferentiationENG.pdf [Accessed 20 November 2019].

Welsh, J. F. and Metcalf, J., 2003. Faculty and administrative support for institutional effectiveness activities. *Journal of Higher Education*, 74(4), pp. 445-468.

Weick, K. E., 1995. *Sensemaking in Organizations*. Sage, CA: Thousand Oaks.

Weick, K.E.; Sutcliffe, K.M. and Obstfeld, D., 2005. Organizing and the process of sensemaking. *Organization Science*, 16(4), pp. 409–421.

Westney, D., 1993. Institutional theory and the multinational corporation. In *Organization Theory and the Multinational Corporation*, pp. 53-76, Sumantra Ghoshal and D. Eleanor Westney, ed. New York: St. Martin's.

Whitehead, T.L., 2005. Basic classical ethnographic methods, *CEHC working papers*, Available from: http://tonywhitehead.squarespace.com/tools-products/ [Accessed 3 December 2019].

Wiersema, M. F. and Bantel, K. A., 1992. Top management team demography and corporate strategic change. *Academy of management journal*, 35(1), pp. 91–121.

Wierzbowski, M., 1988. Role of students at the modern university. In University today, 33rd session, 28-31 August 1988: *Models of modem universities (abstracts).* Union of Universities of Yugoslavia, Dubrovnik, Croatia, Yugoslavia.

Wischnevsky, J.D., and Damanpour, F., 2006. Organizational transformation and performance: an examination of three perspectives, *Journal of managerial issues*, 18 (1), pp. 104-128.

Wuthnow, R, Hunter, J.D., Bergesen, A. and Kurzweil, E., 1984. *Cultural Analysis*. Boston: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Yang, L. and McCall, B., 2014. World education finance policies and higher education access: a statistical analysis of World Development Indicators for 86 countries. International Journal of Educational Development, 35 (0), pp. 25–36.

Yin, R. K., 2010. *Qualitative research from start to finish*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Zapata, G.C., Lacorte, M., 2007. Preservice and inservice instructors' metaphorical constructions of second language teachers. *Foreign Language Annals*, 40 (3), pp. 521-534.

Zelditch, M., 2001. Theories of legitimacy. In J. T. Jost and B. Major, eds. *The psychology of legitimacy: Emerging perspectives on ideology, justice, and intergroup relations,* pp. 33–53. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Ziderman, A., 2002. Alternative objectives of student loan schemes: implications for design, evaluation and policy. *Welsh journal of education*, 11(1), pp. 37-47.

Zilber, T. B., 2007. Stories and the discursive dynamics of institutional entrepreneurship: The case of Israeli high-tech after the bubble. *Organization Studies*, 28, pp. 1035–1054.

Zimmerman, M. A., and Zeitz, G. J., 2002. Beyond survival: achieving new venture growth by building legitimacy. *Academy of Management Review*, 27, pp. 414–431.

Zucker. L. G., 1987. Institutional theories of organizations. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 13, pp. 443-464.

APPENDIX A

Personal information and values

The questions pertaining to values are:

- Interviewee's name, position, university, and contact details)
- What is the most important thing for yourself? In other words, what do you value most in life? Why?
- What is the most important thing about your family? Why?
- What is the most important thing about your friends? Why?
- What is the most important thing about your work? Why?
- What is the most important thing about your neighbourhood? Why?
- What is the most important thing about the world you are living now? Why?

The questions pertaining to emotions and thoughts during the student protests:

South Africa's Higher Education students' strike

- Could you please tell us a bit about the students' strike and chaos between 2015 and 2016?
- How did you feel about that chaotic time? Why did you feel what you felt?
- Did you share your feeling with anyone at work?
- How did your manager's feel about it?
- How did your colleagues at the same managerial level feel about this? How did they experience this?
- How did your subordinates feel about it?
- Based on the personal values you talked about, do you support the strike or not?
- At this time, did you talk to other people for advice?
- Did people ask you for advice? What did you tell them to do?

Free Higher Education in South Africa

- What did you expect the outcome to be prior to the announcement made in December?
- How did you feel when the president announced the free higher education for the poor in South Africa? Why did you feel what you felt?

- Your university is now implementing the free higher education. What do you think about this change? Why?
- Do you see it as a strategic change for the university?
- If you do, do you see it as a planned strategic change or unplanned strategic change?
- How do you feel about this change (the free higher education)? Why Do you think its planned or unplanned changed?
- Now that we are in this change how do you feel about it?
- What would motivate you to embrace this change?
- What would stop you from feeling like that?
- Do you think we give enough recognition in your environment?
- Based on your personal values do you support this free higher education? Why or why not?
- How often do you interact with your manager about this change?
- What does s/he think about this change?
- What does s/he feel about this change?
- Do you think we discussed the changes enough and the implications?
- How often do you communicate with peer colleagues at the same managerial level with you about this change?
- What do they think about this change?
- What do they feel about it?
- How often do you interact with your subordinates about this change?
- What do they think about it?
- What do they feel about it?

Other strategic changes at the university

- Are there other strategic changes at your university at the moment? What are they?
- All these strategic changes, including the free higher education, what is your University's biggest priority? Why that? (If not free higher education, why is it)?
- Do you have any pressure in implementing these changes?
- Where do they come from?
- Based on your personal values we talked above, do you support these strategic changes? Why or why not?

- How often do you interact with your manager about these changes?
- What does s/he think about these changes?
- What does s/he feel about these changes?
- How often do you communicate with peer colleagues at the same managerial level with you about these changes?
- What do they think about them?
- What do they feel about them?
- How often do you interact with your subordinates about these changes?
- What do they think about them?
- What do the feel about them?
- Overall, how do you feel about all the changes above?
- Do you believe that they will all succeed Why/not?
- Do you ultimately feel that these changes would be sustainable and that they will succeed?
- How do you see the future of universities? Why?